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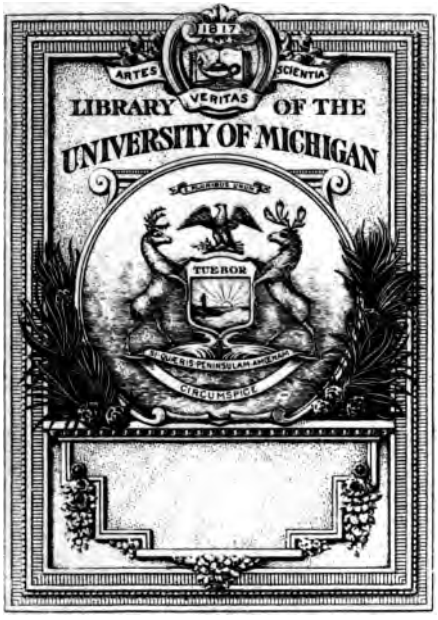
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BOSWELL'S CORRESPONDENCE, AND HIS JOURNAL OF A TOUR TO CORSICA.

BOSWELL'S CORRESPONDENCE

WITH THE HONOURABLE

ANDREW ERSKINE

AND HIS

JOURNAL OF A TOUR TO CORSICA

(REPRINTED FROM THE ORIGINAL EDITIONS)

EDITED

WITH A

PREFACE, INTRODUCTION, AND NOTES

BY

GEORGE BIRKBECK HILL, D.C.L.

AUTHOR OF "DR. JOHNSON: HIS FRIENDS AND HIS CRITICS."

LONDON:

THOS. DE LA RUE & CO.

1879



PRINTED BY
THOMAS DE LA RUE AND CO., BUNHILL ROW,
LONDON.

English
Grant
12.11.24
11010

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BOSWELL AND ERSKINE'S LETTERS.

PREFACE.

BOSWELL did not bring out his "Life of Johnson" till he was past his fiftieth year. His "Journal of a Tour to the Hebrides" had appeared more than five years earlier. While it is on these two books that his fame rests, yet to the men of his generation he was chiefly known for his work on Corsica and for his friendship with Paoli. His admiration for Johnson he had certainly proclaimed far and wide. He had long been off, in the words of his father, "wi' the land-louping scoundrel of a Corsican, and had pinned himself to a dominie—an auld dominie who keeped a schule and cau'd it an acaadamy." Nevertheless it was to Corsica and its heroic chief that he owed the position that he undoubtedly held among men of letters. He was Corsica Boswell and Paoli Boswell long before he became famous as Johnson Boswell.

It has been shown elsewhere* what a spirited thing it was in this young Scotchman to make his way into an island, the interior of which no traveller from this country had ever before visited. The Mediterranean still swarmed with Turkish corsairs,

* "Dr. Johnson: His Friends and His Critics." By George Birkbeck Hill, D.C.L. Smith, Elder & Co.

while Corsica itself was in a very unsettled condition. It had been computed that, till Paoli took the rule and held it with a firm hand, the state had lost no less than 800 subjects every year by assassination. Boswell, as he tells us in his Journal, had been warned by an officer of rank in the British Navy, who had visited several of the ports, of the risk he ran to his life in going among these "barbarians." Moreover a state of hostility existed between the Corsicans and the Republic of Genoa—which, the year before Boswell's visit, had obtained the assistance of France. The interior of the island was still held by Paoli, but many of the seaport towns were garrisoned by the French and the Genoese. At the time of Boswell's visit war was not being actively carried on, for the French commander had been instructed merely to secure these points, and not to undertake offensive operations against the natives. From the Journal that Boswell gives, we see that when once he had landed he ran no risks; but it is not every young man who, when out on his travels, leaves the safe and beaten round to go into a country that is almost unknown, and to prove to others that there also safety is to be found. With good reason did Johnson write to him—"Come home and expect such welcome as is due to him whom a wise and noble curiosity has led where perhaps no native of this country ever was before." With scarcely less reason did Paoli say, "A man

come from Corsica will be like a man come from the Antipodes."

How strongly his journey and his narrative touched the hearts of people at home may still be read in Mrs. Barbauld's fine lines on Corsica :—

"Such were the working thoughts which swelled the breast
Of generous Boswell; when with nobler aim
And views beyond the narrow beaten track
By trivial fancy trod, he turned his course
From polished Gallia's soft delicious vales,
From the grey reliques of imperial Rome,
From her long galleries of laureled stone,
Her chiseled heroes and her marble gods,
Whose dumb majestic pomp yet awes the world,
To animated forms of patriot zeal;
Warm in the living majesty of virtue;
Elate with fearless spirit; firm; resolved;
By fortune nor subdued; nor awed by power." *

Gray was moved greatly by the account given of Paoli. "He is a man," he wrote, "born two thousand years after his time." Horace Walpole had written to beg him to read the book. "What

* "Mrs. Barbauld's Poems," vol. i., p. 2. It is certainly strange that Boswell, so far as I know, nowhere quotes these lines. He was not wont to let the world remain in ignorance of any compliment that had been paid him. I fear that he was rather ashamed at finding himself praised by a writer who was not only a woman, but also was the wife of "a little presbyterian parson who kept an infant boarding school."

relates to Paoli," he said, "will amuse you much." What merely amused Walpole "moved" Gray "strangely." It moved others besides him. Subscriptions were raised for the Corsicans, and money and arms were sent to them from this country. Boswell writes to tell his friend Temple—"I have hopes that our Government will interfere. In the meantime, by a private subscription in Scotland, I am sending this week £700 worth of ordnance." Other subscriptions were forwarded which Paoli, as is told in a letter from him published in the "Gentleman's Magazine,"* "applied to the support of the families of those patriots who, abhorring a foreign yoke, have abandoned their houses and estates in that part of the country held by the enemy, and have retired to join our army."

Boswell's work met with a rapid sale. The copyright he sold to Dilly for one hundred guineas. The publisher must have made no small gain by the bargain, for a third edition was called for within a year. "My book," writes Boswell, "has amazing celebrity: Lord Lyttelton, Mr. Walpole, Mrs. Macaulay, Mr. Garrick have all written me noble letters about it." With his Lordship's letter he was so much delighted that in the third edition he obtained leave to use it to "enrich" his book. Johnson pronounced his Journal in a very high degree curious and delightful. It is surprising that a work which

* "Gentleman's Magazine," vol. xxxix., p. 214.

thus delighted Johnson, moved Gray strangely, and amused Horace Walpole, can now be met with only in old libraries and on the shelves of a dealer in second-hand books. I doubt whether a new edition has been published in the last hundred years. It is still more surprising when we remember that it is the work of an author who has written a book "that is likely to be read as long as the English exists, either as a living or as a dead language." The explanation of this, I take it, is to be found in the distinction that Johnson draws between Boswell's Account of Corsica, which forms more than two-thirds of the whole book, and the Journal of his Tour. His history, he said, was like other histories. It was copied from books. His Journal rose out of his own experience and observation. His history was read, and perhaps read with eagerness, because at the time when it appeared there was a strong interest felt in the Corsicans. In despair of maintaining their independence, they had been willing to place themselves and their island entirely under the protection of Great Britain. The offer had been refused, but they still hoped for our assistance Not a few Englishmen felt with Lord Lyttelton when he wrote—"I wish with you that our Government had shown more respect for Corsican liberty, and I think it disgraces our nation that we do not live in good friendship with a brave people engaged in the

noblest of all contests, a contest against tyranny." But in such a contest as this Corsica was before long to play a different part. Scarcely four years after Boswell from some distant hill "had a fine view of Ajaccio and its environs," that town was rendered famous by the birth of Napoleon Buonaparte.

With whatever skill Boswell's history had been compiled it could not have lived. There were not, indeed, the materials out of which a history that should last could have been formed. The whole island boasted of but one printing press and one bookseller's shop. The feuds and wars of the wild islanders might have lived in the songs of the poet, but were little fit for the purposes of the historian. He who attempts to write the history of such a people is almost forced to accept tradition for fact, and to believe in their Arthurs and their Tells. The Corsicans are, indeed, from time to time found in one or other of the great tracks of European history. As Boswell says, their island had belonged to the Phœnicians, the Etruscans, the Carthaginians, the Romans, the Goths, and the Saracens. It had been conquered by France, and had been made a gift from that kingdom to the Pope. It had been given by the Pope to the Pisans, and from them had passed to the Republic of Genoa. It had undergone strange and rapid revolutions, but they were those common revolutions that befall a wild race that lives in the midst of powerful neighbours.

Boswell, unsurpassed though he is as a biographer, admirable as he is as a writer of a Journal, yet had little of the stuff out of which an historian is made. His compilation is a creditable performance for a young man who had but lately returned home from his travels. It certainly adds nothing to the reputation of the author of the "Life of Johnson." But while it lies overwhelmed with deserved neglect, it ought not to drag down with it the Journal of his Tour. That portion of the work is lively, is interesting, and is brief. It can be read with pleasure now, as it was read with pleasure when it first appeared. But, besides this, it is interesting to us as the early work of a writer whose mind has been a puzzle to men of letters. Even should we accept Macaulay's judgment on Boswell, and despise him as he despises him, yet it must surely be worth while to examine closely the early writings of an author, who has, "in an important department of literature, immeasurably surpassed such writers as Tacitus, Clarendon, Alfieri, and his own idol Johnson."* This Journal is like the youthful sketch of some great artist. It exhibits the merits which, later on, distinguished, in so high a degree the mature writer.

Together with the "Journal of a Tour to Corsica," I am reprinting a volume of letters that passed between Boswell and his friend The Honourable

* "Macaulay's Essays," vol. i., p. 377.

Andrew Erskine. Lively and amusing though they often are, yet I should not have proposed to republish them did not they throw almost as much light on Boswell's character as the Journal throws light on his powers as a writer. In his account of Corsica, there is a passage in which, while describing the historian Petrus Cyrnaeus, he at the same time describes himself. "The fourth book of Petrus Cyrnaeus," he says, "is entirely taken up with an account of his own wretched vagabond life, full of strange, whimsical anecdotes. He begins it very gravely: 'Quoniam ad hunc locum perventum est, non alienum videtur de Petri qui haec scripsit vita et moribus proponere.' 'Since we are come thus far it will not be amiss to say something of the life and manners of Petrus, who writeth this history.' He gives a very excellent character of himself, and, I dare say, a very faithful one. But so minute is his narration, that he takes care to inform posterity that he was very irregular in his method of walking, and that he preferred sweet wine to hard. In short, he was a man of considerable parts, with a great simplicity and oddity of character."

To the simplicity and oddity of character that Boswell shared with this learned historian, there was certainly added not a little impudence. It was an impudence that was lively and amusing; but none the less was it downright impudence. We

are amazed at the audacity with which two young men ventured to publish to the world the correspondence which had passed between them when they were scarcely of age. In fact, the earlier letters were written when Boswell was but twenty. Their justification only increases their offence. "Curiosity," they say, "is the most prevalent of all our passions; and the curiosity for reading letters, is the most prevalent of all kinds of curiosity. Had any man in the three kingdoms found the following letters, directed, sealed, and adorned with post-marks,—provided he could have done it honestly—he would have read every one of them." There is this, however, that makes us always look with a certain indulgence on Boswell. He never plays the hypocrite. He likes praise, he likes to be talked about, he likes to know great people, and he no more cares to conceal his likings than Sancho Panza cared to conceal his appetite. Three pullets and a couple of geese were but so much scum, which Don Quixote's squire whipped off to stay his stomach till dinner-time. By the time Boswell was six-and-twenty he could boast that he had made the acquaintance of Adam Smith, Robertson, Hume, Johnson, Goldsmith, Wilkes, Garrick, Horace Walpole, Voltaire, Rousseau, and Paoli. He had twice at least received a letter from the Earl of Chatham. But his appetite for knowing great men could never be satisfied. These might stay his stomach for a while, but more would be

presently wanted. At the time when he published this volume of Letters he seems to have had some foresight into his future life. "I am thinking," he says, "of the intimacies which I shall form with the learned and ingenious in every science, and of the many amusing literary anecdotes which I shall pick up." When fame did come upon him by his book on Corsica, no one could have relished it more. "I am really the *great man* now," he writes to his friend Temple. "I have had David Hume in the forenoon, and Mr. Johnson in the afternoon of the same day visiting me. Sir John Pringle, Dr. Franklin, and some more company dined with me to-day; and Mr. Johnson and General Oglethorpe one day, Mr. Garrick alone another, and David Hume and some more *literati* another, dine with me next week. I give admirable dinners and good claret; and the moment I go abroad again, which will be in a day or two, I set up my chariot. This is enjoying the fruit of my labours, and appearing like the friend of Paoli. * * * David Hume came on purpose the other day to tell me that the Duke of Bedford was very fond of my book, and had recommended it to the Duchess."

In the preface to the third edition, he says,— "When I first ventured to send my book into the world, I fairly owned an ardent desire for literary fame. I have obtained my desire: and whatever clouds may overcast my days, I can now walk here

among the rocks and woods of my ancestors, with an agreeable consciousness that I have done something worthy." It was about this time that, writing to the great Earl of Chatham, he said—"I can labour hard; I feel myself coming forward, and I hope to be useful to my country. Could your Lordship find time to honour me now and then with a letter? I have been told how favourably your Lordship has spoken of me. To correspond with a Paoli and a Chatham, is enough to keep a young man ever ardent in the pursuit of virtuous fame."*

A few months before his account of Corsica was published, he had fixed upon the date of its publication as the period when he should steadily begin that pursuit of virtuous fame, which now was to be secured by correspondence with a Paoli and a Chatham. "I am always for fixing some period," he wrote, "for my perfection, as far as possible. Let it be when my account of Corsica is published; I shall then have a character which I must support." Unhappily the time for his perfection was again and again put off. Johnson, in speaking of Derrick, said—"Derrick may do very well, as long as he can outrun his character; but the moment his character gets up with him, it is all over." With Boswell, just the opposite was the case. He soon acquired a character—a character which he was bound to support. But he could never get up with

* "Chatham Correspondence," vol. iii., p. 246.

it. The friend of Paoli, the friend of Johnson, was, unhappily, given to drink. The gay spirits and lively health of youth supported him for a while; but, even in these early days, he was too often troubled with that depression of spirit which follows on a debauch. But, as time passed on, and the habit grew stronger upon him, his health began to give way, and his cheerfulness of mind to desert him. He lived but four years after the publication of his great work.

In the preface to the second edition of the "Life of Johnson" he shows his delight in his fame. "There are some men, I believe, who have, or think they have, a very small share of vanity. Such may speak of their literary fame in a decorous state of diffidence. But I confess that I am so formed by nature and by habit, that to restrain the effusion of delight on having obtained such fame, to me would be truly painful. Why, then, should I suppress it? Why, 'out of the abundance of the heart,' should I not speak?" This preface bears the date of July 1, 1793. Only ten days earlier he had written to tell Temple how he had been drinking, and had been robbed. "The robbery is only of a few shillings; but the cut on my head and bruises on my arms were sad things, and confined me to bed in pain, and fever, and helplessness, as a child, many days. * * * This shall be a crisis in my life: I trust I shall henceforth be a sober, regular man.

Indeed, my indulgence in wine has, of late years especially, been excessive. * * * Your suggestion as to my being carried off in a state of intoxication, is awful. I thank you for it, my dear friend. It impressed me much, I assure you." It was too late in life to form resolutions. A year later he was again "resolved anew to be upon his guard." In the May of 1795, he died, after an illness of great suffering. To him might be applied some of the lines which the great poet who lived so near him wrote as his own epitaph :—

"He keenly felt the friendly glow,
And softer flame;
But thoughtless follies laid him low,
And stain'd his name."

Boswell had, indeed, but little of that "prudent, cautious, self-control," which, as Burns tells us, "is wisdom's root." It is a sad thought that at the very same time the two most famous writers that Ayrshire can boast, men whose homes were but a few miles apart, were at the same time drinking themselves to death. Burns outlived Boswell little more than a year.

Boswell was fifty-four years old when he died. Greatly as he relished wine, he relished fame still more. He had worked hard for fame, and he had fairly earned it; but in its full flush his intemperance swept him away. There can be little question that

his first triumph in the field of letters, his book on Corsica brought him far greater pleasure than his "Life of Johnson," by which his name will live. Perhaps the happiest day in his life was when, at the Shakespeare Jubilee, he entered the amphitheatre in the dress of a Corsican chief. "On the front of his cap was embroidered, in gold letters, "*Viva la Libertà*," and on the side of it was a handsome blue feather and cockade, so that it had an elegant as well as a warlike appearance." "So soon as he came into the room," says the account in the "London Magazine," written, no doubt, by himself, "he drew universal attention." The applause that his "Life of Johnson" brought him was, no doubt, far greater, but then, as I have said, his health was breaking, and his fine spirits were impaired. He who would know Boswell at his happiest—when he was, as Hume described him, very good humoured, very agreeable, and very mad, must read his volume of Letters, and the Journals of his Tours to Corsica and the Hebrides.

LETTERS

BETWEEN

THE HONOURABLE

ANDREW ERSKINE,

AND

JAMES BOSWELL, Eſq;

LONDON:
Printed by SAMUEL CHANDLER;
For W. FLEXNEY, near Gray's-Inn-Gate, Holborn.
MDCCLXIII.

ADVERTISEMENT.

CURIOSITY is the most prevalent of all our passions; and the curiosity for reading letters, is the most prevalent of all kinds of curiosity. Had any man in the three Kingdoms found the following letters, directed, sealed, and adorned with post-marks,—provided he could have done it honestly—he would have read every one of them; or, had they been ushered into the world, from Mr. Flexney's shop, in that manner, they would have been bought up with the greatest avidity. As they really once had all the advantages of concealment, we hope their present more conspicuous form will not tend to diminish their merit. They have made ourselves laugh; we hope they will have the same effect upon other people.



LETTERS.

[In a Memoir of James Boswell,* by the Rev. Charles Rogers, a short account is given of the Hon. Andrew Erskine, Boswell's correspondent. He was the youngest son of Alexander, fifth Earl of Kellie. He served in the army for some years. After his retirement he settled at Edinburgh. "His habits were regular, but he indulged occasionally at cards, and was partial to the game of whist. Having sustained a serious loss at his favourite pastime, he became frantic, and threw himself into the Forth and perished." Burns, writing to his friend Thomson, October, 1793, says—"Your last letter, my dear Thomson, was indeed laden with heavy news. Alas, poor Erskine! The recollection that he was a coadjutor in your publication has, till now, scared me from writing to you, or turning my thoughts on composing for you." "He was," adds Dr. Rogers, "of a tall, portly form, and to the last wore gaiters and a flapped vest." By this last description Dr. Rogers's readers may be pleasantly reminded of an anecdote that is given for the first time, I believe, in his book. "Dr. Johnson used to laugh at a passage in Carte's 'Life of the Duke of Ormond,' where he gravely observed that 'he was always in full dress when he went to Court; too many being in the practice of going thither with double lapells.'" As poor Erskine "wore to the last his gaiters and a flapped vest," no doubt he had them on when he drowned himself.—ED.]

LETTER I.

Auchinleck, Aug. 25, 1761.

Dear ERSKINE,—No ceremony, I beseech you. Give me your hand. How is my honest Captain Andrew?

* "Boswelliana: The Commonplace Book of James Boswell." With a Memoir and Annotations, by the Rev. Charles Rogers, LL.D. London: Printed for the Grampian Club, 1874.

How goes it with the elegant gentle Lady A——? the lovely sighing Lady J——? and how, O how does that glorious luminary Lady B—— do? You see I retain my usual volatility. The Boswells, you know, came over from Normandy, with William the Conqueror, and some of us possess the spirit of our ancestors the French. I do for one. A pleasant spirit it is. *Vive la Bagatelle*, is the maxim. A light heart may bid defiance to fortune. And yet, Erskine, I must tell you, that I have been a little pensive of late, amorously pensive, and disposed to read Shenstone's Pastoral on Absence, the tenderness and simplicity of which I greatly admire. A man who is in love is like a man who has got the tooth-ache, he feels most acute pain while nobody pities him. In that situation am I at present: but well do I know that I will not be long so. So much for inconstancy. As this is my first epistle to you, it cannot in decency be a long one. Pray write to me soon. Your letters, I prophecy, will entertain me not a little; and will besides be extremely serviceable in many important respects. They will supply me with oil to my lamps, grease to my wheels, and blacking to my shoes. They will furnish me with strings to my fiddle, lashes to my whip, lining to my breeches, and buttons to my coat. They will make charming spurs, excellent knee buckles, and inimitable watch-keys. In short, while they last I shall neither want breakfast, dinner, nor supper. I shall keep a couple of horses, and I shall sleep upon a bed of down. I shall be in France this year, and in Spain the next; with many other particulars too tedious to mention. You may take me in a

metaphorical sense; but I would rather choose to be understood literally.

I am
Your most affectionate friend,
JAMES BOSWELL.

LETTER II.

Kelly, Sept. 11, 1761.

HAIL! mighty Boswell! at thy awful name
The fainting muse relumes her sinking flame.
Behold how high the tow'ring blaze aspires,
While fancy's waving pinions fan my fires!
Swells the full song? it swells alone from thee;
Some spark of thy bright genius kindles me!
"But softly, Sir," I hear you cry,
"This wild bombast is rather dry:
I hate your d——n'd insipid song,
That sullen stalks in lines so long;
Come, give us short ones like to Butler,
Or, like our friend Auchinleck * the cutler."
A Poet, Sir, whose fame is to support,
Must ne'er write verses tripping pert and short:
Who ever saw a judge himself disgrace,
By trotting to the bench with hasty pace?
I swear, dear Sir, you're really in the wrong;
To make a line that's good, I say, James, make it long.

You see, Sir, I have quite the best of the argument;

* Pronounced "Affleck."—ED.

and indeed I was determined not to give it up, till you acknowledged yourself vanquished; so to verse I go again, tooth and nail.

How well you talk of glory and the guards,
Of fighting heroes, and their great rewards!
Our eyes behold you glow with martial flame,
Our ears attend the never-ceasing theme.
Fast from your tongue the rousing accents flow,
And horror darkens on your sable brow!
We hear the thunder of the rolling war,
And see red vict'ry shouting from her car!

You kindly took me up, an awkward cub,
And introduced me to the *Soaping-Club;
Where ev'ry Tuesday eve our ears are blest
With genuine humour, and with genuine jest:
The voice of mirth ascends the list'ning sky,
While, "soap his own beard, every man," you cry.
Say, who could e'er indulge a yawn or nap,
When †Barclay roars forth snip, and †Bainbridge snap?
Tell me how I your favours may return;
With thankfulness and gratitude I burn.
I've one advice, oh! take it I implore!
Search out America's untrodden shore;

* The Soaping-Club—a Club in Edinburgh, the motto of which was, "Every Man soap his own Beard;" or, "Every Man indulge his own Humour." Their game was that facetious one, Snip, Snap, Snorum.

† Barclay and Bainbridge, two members of this Club.

There seek some vast Savannah rude and wild,
Where Europe's sons of slaughter never smil'd,
With fiend-like arts, insidious to betray
The sooty natives as a lawful prey.
At you th' astonish'd savages shall stare,
And hail you as a God, and call you fair:
Your blooming beauty shall unrivall'd shine,
*And Captain Andrew's whiteness yield to thine.

In reality, I'm under vast obligations to you. It was you who first made me thoroughly sensible (indeed I very readily believed it) of the excellencies of my own Poetry; and about that time, I made two wonderful discoveries, to wit, that you was a sensible man, and that I was a good poet; discoveries which I dare say are yet doubted by some incredulous people. Boswell, I shall not praise your letter, because I know you have an aversion at being thought a genius, or a wit. The reluctance with which you always repeat your Cub,† and the gravity of countenance which you always assume upon that occasion, are convincing proofs of this assertion. You hate flattery, too, but in spite of your teeth I must tell you, that you are the best Poet, and the most humorous letter-writer I know; and that you have a finer complexion, and dance better than any man of my acquaintance. For my part, I actually think you would make an excellent

* "And Captain Andrew's whiteness, &c." The writers of these Letters, instead of being rivals in wit, were rivals in complexion.

† In March, 1762, Boswell published "The Cub at Newmarket: a Tale." (Dodsley).—ED.

champion at the approaching coronation.* What though malevolent critics may say you are too little, yet you are a Briareus in comparison of Tydeus the hero of Statius's Thebais; and if he was not a warrior, then am I, Andrew Erskine, Lieutenant in the 71st regiment, blind of one eye, hump-backed, and lame in both legs. We all tired so much of the Highlands, that we had not been there three weeks before we all came away again. Lady B—— is gone a-visiting, and the rest of us are come to Kelly. It was most unaccountable in me to leave New-Tarbat; for nowhere will you meet with such fine ingredients for poetical description. However, we are all going back again when Mr. M—— comes from London; so some time in October you may expect a most cordial invitation. This is all at present (according to the simple but eloquent expression of the vulgar) from your sincere friend,

ANDREW ERSKINE.

LETTER III.

Auchinleck, Sept. 14, 1761.

Dear Captain Andrew! Poet of renown!
Whether the chairmen of Edina's town
You curious draw, and make 'em justly speak,
To use a vulgar phrase, *as clean's a leek;*
Or smart Epistles, Fables, Songs you write,
All put together handsome trim and tight;

* George III. was crowned on September 22nd, of this year.—ED.

Or when your sweetly plaintive muse does sigh,
And elegiac strains you happy try;
Or when in ode sublime your genius soars,
Which guineas brings to Donaldson by scores;
Accept the thanks of ME, as quick as sage,
Accept sincerest thanks for ev'ry page,
For ev'ry page?—for ev'ry single line
Of your rich letter aided by the Nine.*

* * * *

You are now so heartily tired, that it would be absolutely barbarous to stun your ears any longer; only give me leave to tell you in one good round sentence, that your prose is admirable, and that I am just now (at three o'clock in the morning) sitting over the poor pale remnant of a once glorious blazing fire, and feasting upon it, till I am all in a *Lather.*

I cannot stop yet. Allow me a few more words. I live here in a remote corner of an old ruinous house, where my ancestors have been very jovial. What a solemn idea rushes on my mind! They are all gone; I must follow. Well, and what then? Let me shift about to another subject. The best I can think of is a sound sleep. So good night, and believe me,

Yours,

JAMES BOSWELL.

* The rest of Boswell's verses—more than a hundred in number—the reader will thank me for omitting.—ED.

LETTER IV.

Auchinleck, Oct. 10, 1761.

Dear ERSKINE,—Had Philip of Macedon been saddle-sick with riding up and down the country after his unruly son Alexander, and been waiting in extreme pain, till the surgeon of the next village brought him emollient relief, he could not have been more impatient than I am for a return to my last letter. I thought, indeed, that my firing so great a gun, would have produced a speedy and a suitable echo, and I had no doubt of at least being paid the interest of a sum so very large. I now give you fair warning, that if something is not speedily done in this affair, I shall be obliged to take very disagreeable methods. From this way of talking, I begin to fancy myself a Schoolmaster; a character next to that of a giant, most terrible to tender minds. Don't think to escape the rod. Don't think your dignity as a poet will save you from it. I make no question, but what that acrimonious pedagogue George Buchanan has often applied it to his pupil, and he you know was a poet and a king into the bargain. I have been reading the Rosciad. You see my very studies have tended towards flagellation. Upon my word Churchill* does scourge with a vengeance; I should not like to come under his

* Churchill's "Rosciad" had been published in March of this year.—Ed.

discipline. He is certainly a very able writer. He has great power of numbers.

"In manly tides of verse he rolls along."*

I desire, Erskine, once again, that you may write without delay, otherwise, I shall no longer be

Your affectionate friend,

JAMES BOSWELL.

LETTER V.

Kelly, Nov. 1, 1761.

Dear BOSWELL,—If you could conceive the many twitches of conscience I have felt upon your account, the agitations, the compunctions, the remorses, you would certainly forgive me. However, I was beginning to turn callous against all suggestions of writing to you, when your last letter arrived, which like the day of judgment, made my transgressions stare me full in the face. Indolence and unwearied stupidity have been my constant companions this many a day; and that amiable couple, above all things in the world detest letter-writing. Besides, I heard you was just going to be married, and as a poet, I durst not approach you without an Epithalamium, and an Epithalamium was a thing, which at that time I could not compass. It was all in vain, that Cupid and Hymen, Juno and Luna, offered their assistance; I had no sort of employment for them.

* "In manly tides of sense they roll'd along."
—"The Rosciad."—ED.

When you and I walked twice round the meadow upon the subject of matrimony, I little thought that my difference in opinion from you, would have brought on your marriage so soon; for I can attribute it to no other cause: From this I learn that contradiction is of use in society; and I shall take care to encourage that humour, or rather spirit, in myself. As this is the first marriage I ever made, I expect great congratulations, especially from you.

I have been busy furbishing up some old pieces for Donaldson's* second volume: I exceed in quantity, twenty Eustace Budgels, according to your epistle. Pray what is become of the Cub? Is Dodsley to sell you for a shilling, or not? I have written one or two new things, an Ode to Pity, and an Epistle to the great Donaldson, which is to be printed: The subject was promising, but I made nothing of it. I must give over poetry, and copy epistles out of that elegant treatise the Complete Letter-Writer. D—— is gone to London, his parting advice to his sister was, to keep the key of the coals herself; so I suppose he intends to keep up his fire, this winter, in parliament, and not to go over the coals with the ministry.

Lady A—— and I set out for New-Tarbat to-morrow. Could you come? Let nothing but wedlock detain you. Oh, Boswell! the soporific effluvia of a hearty dinner cloud all my faculties. I'm as dull as the tolling in of the

* Donaldson, an Edinburgh bookseller, was bringing out a collection of Original Poems, by the Rev. Mr. Blacklock, and other Scotch gentlemen. Erskine was the editor.—ED.

eighth-hour bell, or a neighbour in the country, that pays you an annual visit. At this present moment, I'm astonished how anybody can be clever; and your letter in heroic verse seems more amazing to me than if the King of Britain was to send an express for me, to dance a hornpipe before him, or the King of Prussia was to declare in a manifesto, that I was the occasion of the present war. I detest the invention of writing; and nothing could reconcile me to it, but that I can assure you at this distance, that I am yours sincerely,

ANDREW ERSKINE.

There's a genteel conclusion for you. When you come to Edinburgh, I'll settle an unintermitting correspondence with you.

LETTER VI.

Edinburgh, Nov. 17, 1761.

Dear ERSKINE,—Much much concern does it give me, to find that you have been in such bad spirits as your last most grievously indicates. I believe we great geniuses are all a little subject to the sorcery of that whimsical demon the spleen, which indeed we cannot complain of, considering what power of enchantment we ourselves possess, by the sweet magic of our flowing numbers. I would recommend to you to read Mr. Green's * excellent poem upon that subject. He will dispel the clouds and

* Matthew Green (1696—1737). Author of "The Spleen."—ED.

enliven you immediately. Or if that should not do, you may have recourse to Xenophon's method, which was boiling potatoes, and pelting the cats with them, an infallible receipt to promote risibility.

So you too have listened to the report of my marriage, and must forsooth display a pretty vein of jocularity upon the mournful occasion. Did you really believe it? If you did, you will never be able to astonish me with any thing else that is wonderful in your creed, for I shall reckon your judgment at least three stanzas worse than formerly.

In the name of every thing that is upside down, what could the people mean by marrying me? If they had boiled me into portable soup, or hammered me into horse-shoes, I should not have been greatly surprised. A man who has so deeply pondered on the wonders daily presented to our view, and who has experienced so many vicissitudes of fortune, as I have done, can easily make allowance for stranger things than these. But I own their matrimonial system exceeds my comprehension.

Happy is it for the world that this affair did not take place. An event so prodigious must have been attended with very alarming consequences. For my own part, I tremble when I think of it. Damocles, Nero, and Richard the Third, would have appeared amiable princes in comparison of me. Wherever I went I should have carried horror and devastation, sparing neither sex nor age. All, all should have been sacrificed to my relentless cruelty. Donaldson is busy printing his second volume. I have mustered up a few verses for him, some old, some

new. I will not boast of *them.* But I'll tell you one thing; the volume will be pretty free from typographical errors: I have the honour to correct the proof-sheets. My Cub is now with Dodsley. I fancy he will soon make his appearance in public. I long to see him in his Pall-Mall * habit: Though I'm afraid he will look a little awkward. Write to me often. You shall have the best answers I can give you.

I remain, yours,

JAMES BOSWELL.

LETTER VII.

New-Tarbat, Nov. 23, 1761.

Dear BOSWELL,—As we never hear that Demosthenes could broil beef-steaks, or Cicero poach eggs, we may safely conclude, that these gentlemen understood nothing of cookery. In like manner it may be concluded, that you, James Boswell, and I Andrew Erskine, cannot write serious epistles. This, as Mr. Tristram † says, I deny; for this letter of mine shall contain the quintessence of solidity; it shall be a piece of boiled beef and cabbage, a roasted goose, and a boiled leg of pork and greens: in one word, it shall contain advice; sage and mature advice. Oh! James Boswell! take care and don't break your neck; pray don't fracture your skull, and be very cautious in your manner of tumbling down precipices:

* Dodsley's shop was in Pall Mall.—ED.

† The first two volumes of Tristram Shandy were published towards the end of 1759.—ED.

beware of falling into coal-pits, and don't drown yourself in every pool you meet with. Having thus warned you of the most material dangers which your youth and inexperience will be ready to lead you into, I now proceed to others less momentary indeed, but very necessary to be strictly observed. Go not near the Soaping-Club, never mention Drury-lane Playhouse; be attentive to those Pinchbeck buckles which fortune has so graciously given you, of which I am afraid you're hardly fond enough; never wash your face, but above all forswear Poetry: from experience I can assure you, and this letter may serve as a proof, that a man may be as dull in prose as in verse; and as dullness is what we aim at, prose is the easiest of the two. Oh! my friend! profit by these my instructions; think that you see me studying for your advantage, my reverend locks over-shadowing my paper, my hands trembling, and my tongue hanging out, a figure of esteem, affection and veneration. By Heavens! Boswell! I love you more——But this, I think, may be more conveniently expressed in rhyme

More than a herd of swine a kennel muddy,
More than a brilliant belle polemic study,
More than fat Falstaff lov'd a cup of sack,
More than a guilty criminal the rack,
More than attorneys love by cheats to thrive,
And more than witches to be burnt alive.

I begin to be afraid that we shall not see you here this winter; which will be a great loss to you. If ever you travel into foreign parts, as Machiavel used to say, every-

body abroad will require a description of * New-Tarbat from you. That you may not appear totally ridiculous and absurd, I shall send you some little account of it. Imagine then to yourself what Thomson would call an interminable plain,† interspersed in a lovely manner with beautiful green hills. The Seasons here are only shifted by Summer and Spring. Winter with his fur cap and his cat-skin gloves, was never seen in this charming retreat. The Castle is of Gothic structure, awful and lofty: there are fifty bed-chambers in it, with halls, saloons, and galleries without number. Mr. M——'s father, who was a man of infinite humour, caused a magnificent lake to be made, just before the entry of the house. His diversion was to peep out of his window, and see the people who came to visit him, skipping through it;—for there was no other passage—then he used to put on such huge fires to dry their clothes, that there was no bearing them. He used to declare, that he never thought a man good company till he was half drown'd and half burnt; but if in any part of his life he had narrowly escaped hanging (a thing not uncommon in the Highlands) he would perfectly doat upon him, and whenever the story was told him, he was ready to choke himself. But to return. Everything here is in the grand and sublime style. But, alas! some envious magician, with his d——d enchantments, has destroyed all these beauties.

* New-Tarbat, a wild seat in the western Highlands of Scotland, surrounded with mountains.

† "Far smoking o'er the interminable plain."
—Thomson's "Seasons."—Spring.—ED.

By his potent art, the house with so many bed-chambers in it, cannot conveniently lodge above a dozen people. The room which I am writing in, just now, is in reality a handsome parlour of twenty feet by sixteen; though in my eyes, and to all outward appearance, it seems a garret of six feet by four. The magnificent lake is a dirty puddle; the lovely plain, a rude wild country cover'd with the most astonishing high black mountains: the inhabitants, the most amiable race under the sun, appear now to be the ugliest, and look as if they were over-run with the itch. Their delicate limbs, adorned with the finest silk stockings, are now bare, and very dirty; but to describe all the transformations would take up more paper than Lady B—— from whom I had this, would choose to give me. My own metamorphosis is indeed so extraordinary, that I must make you acquainted with it. You know I am really very thick and short, prodigiously talkative and wonderfully impudent. Now I am thin and tall, strangely silent, and very bashful. If these things continue, who is safe? Even you, Boswell, may feel a change. Your fair and transparent complexion may turn black and oily; your person little and squat; and who knows but you may eternally rave about the King of Great Britain's guards;* a species of madness, from which good Lord deliver us!

I have often wondered, Boswell, that a man of your

* Boswell in a letter to his friend Temple, dated May 1st 1761, had thus described himself. "A young fellow whose happiness was always centred in London, * * * who had got his mind filled with the most gay ideas—getting into the Guards, being about Court, enjoying the happiness of the *beau monde*, and the company of men of genius, &c."—ED.

taste in music, cannot play upon the Jew's harp; there are some of us here that touch it very melodiously, I can tell you. Corelli's solo of *Maggie Lauder*, and Pergolesi's sonata of *The Carle he came o'er the Craft*, are excellently adapted to that instrument; let me advise you to learn it. The first cost is but three halfpence, and they last a long time. I have composed the following ode upon it, which exceeds Pindar as much as the Jew's harp does the organ.

ODE UPON A JEW'S HARP.

I.

SWEET instrument! which fix'd in yellow teeth,
So clear so sprightly and so gay is found,
Whether you breathe along the shore of Leith,
Or Lowmond's lofty cliffs thy strains resound;
Struck by a taper finger's gentle tip,
Ah softly in our ears thy pleasing murmurs slip!

II.

Where'er thy lively music's found,
All are jumping, dancing round:
Ev'n trusty William lifts a leg,
And capers like sixteen with Peg;
Both old and young confess thy pow'rful sway,
They skip like madmen and they frisk away.

III.

Rous'd by the magic of the charming air,
The yawning dogs forego their heavy slumbers;

The ladies listen on the narrow stair,
And Captain Andrew straight forgets his numbers.
Cats and mice give o'er their battling,
Pewter plates on shelves are rattling;
But falling down the noise my lady hears,
Whose scolding drowns the trump more tuneful
than the spheres!

Having thus, Boswell, written you a most entertaining letter, with which you are highly pleased; to your great grief I give over in these or the like words, your affectionate friend,

ANDREW ERSKINE.

LETTER VIII.

Edinburgh, Dec. 2, 1761.

Dear ERSKINE,—Notwithstanding of your affecting elegy on the death of two pigs, I am just now returned from eating a most excellent one with the most magnificent Donaldson. I wish you would explain to me the reason of my being so very hard-hearted as to discover no manner of reluctance at that innocent animal's being brought to table well roasted. I will confess to you, my friend, that I fed upon it with no small alacrity—neither do I feel any pangs of remorse for having so done. The reason perhaps lies so deep as to elude our keenest penetration;—at the same time give me leave to offer my conjecture, which you may have by a little transmutation of a vulgar adage, in such manner as to obtain at one and the same time (so to speak) not only a strong reason for

my alleged inhumanity, but also an apparent pun, and a seeming paradox; all which you have for the small and easy charge of saying, The belly has no bowels.

I do assure you the imperial sovereign of Pope's head, Caledonian Dodsley, Scottish Baskerville, and captain general of collective bards, entertained us most sumptuously; I question much if captain Erskine himself ever fared better; although I was the only author in the company, which I own surprised me not a little. Donaldson is undoubtedly a gentleman perfectly skilled in the art of insinuation. His dinners are the most eloquent addresses imaginable. For my own part, I am never a sharer in one of his copious repasts, but I feel my heart warm to the landlord, and spontaneously conceive this expressive soliloquy,—Upon my word I must give him another hundred lines.

Now, my dear Captain, tell me how is it with you, after reading this? With what feeling are you most strongly possessed? But as this depends a good deal upon the time of the day at which you receive my epistle, I shall make no farther inquiry.

Thus, Sir, have I unbosomed the big exultation which possessed me upon occasion of what some of the fathers would call *splendidum prandium;* Englished thus, a splendid dinner.

Are not you all this time very much astonished, nay, somewhat piqued, that I have as yet made no mention of your last, notwithstanding of the wonderful enchantments which you relate, the sagacious advices which you give, and the ode to a Jew's harp, which you add. For-

give me, good Captain. Blame Donaldson. Write to me whenever you have any thing that you wish to say, and believe me,

Yours,

JAMES BOSWELL.

P.S. Are not you very proud of your Ode to Midnight? Lord K—— calls it the best Poem in the English language. But it will not be long so. For in imitation of it I have written an Ode to Gluttony, of which take two stanzas.

I.

HAIL Gluttony! O let me eat
Immensely at thy awful board,
On which to serve the stomach meet,
What art and nature can afford.
I'll furious cram, devoid of fear,
Let but the roast and boil'd appear;
Let me but see a smoking dish,
I care not whether fowl or fish;
Then rush ye floods of ale adown my throat,
And in my belly make the victuals float!

II.

And yet why trust a greasy cook?
Or give to meat the time of play?
While ev'ry trout gulps down a hook,
And poor dumb beasts harsh butchers slay?

Why seek the dull, sauce-smelling gloom,
Of the beef-haunted dining room;
Where D——r gives to every guest
With lib'ral hand whate'er is best;
While you in vain th' insurance must invoke
To give security you shall not choke?

LETTER IX.

New-Tarbat, Dec. 3, 1761.

Dear BOSWELL,

Ev'N now intent upon thy Ode,
I plunge my knife into the beef,
Which, when a cow—as is the mode—
Was *lifted* by a Highland thief.
Ah! spare him, spare him, circuit Lords!
Ah hang him not in hempen cords;
Ah save him in his morn of youth
From the damp-breathing, dark * tolbooth,
Lest when condemn'd and hung in clanking chains,
His body moulder down white-bleached with winter rains!

But let not me intermeddle with your province; to parody the ode to midnight, could only be thought of and executed by the mirth-moving, humour-hunting, raillery-raising James Boswell. You must send me the rest of your Gluttony by the return of the post, even though it should prove the night of the Beard-soaping Club. Did

* Tolbooth Prison.

you ever suspect me of believing your marriage? No, I always said from the beginning, there was nothing in it; I can bring twenty witnesses to prove it, who shall be nameless; indeed if you had been married, I don't know but the same gentlemen might have been prevailed upon to vouch for me that I frequently declared my firm persuasion of it; these kind of witnesses have multiplied greatly of late years, to the eternal credit of many a person's surprising sagacity; but if you want to see this subject pursued and treated with accuracy, peruse Doctor Woodward's Treatise of Fossils, particularly his remarks upon the touchstone.

I am glad to hear you are returned to town, and once more near that seat of learning and genius Mr. Alexander Donaldson's shop. You tell me you are promoted to be his corrector of the press; I wish you also had the office of correcting his children, which they very much want; the eldest son, when I was there, never failed to play at taw all the time, and my queue used frequently to be pulled about; you know, upon account of its length it is very liable to these sort of attacks; I am thinking to cut it off, for I never yet met with a child that could keep his hands from it: and here I can't forbear telling you, that if ever you marry and have children, our acquaintance ceases from that moment, unless you breed them up after the manner of the great Scriblerus, and unless they be suckled with soft verse, and weaned with criticism.

Write me when the volume will be published, and what sort of figure you think it will make, particularly how James Boswell and Andrew Erskine will appear; I

know you will mix your opinion with a good deal of partial praise, as you are one of those extraordinary authors that have a love for their own works, and also one of those still more extraordinary ones that can flatter another. I find fault with one or two things in your letters; I could wish you wrote in a smaller hand, and that when you end a sentence in the beginning of a line, you would begin the next sentence in the same line.

Dear Boswell, go to Donaldson and tell him he is a most inhuman miscreant, and deserves, as he is a Printer, to be pressed to death; then thunder in his ear that he has not sent Captain Erskine his Critical Review.

Lady B—— entreats that you would come here and spend the Christmas holidays; she has sent for two Highland bards to entertain you, and I have a wash-ball and a stick of pomatum much at your service: we are all, thank God, in general pretty clear of the Itch just now, and most of us not near so lousy as we used to be, so I think you may venture. I received your letter ten days after the date, though it only came from Edinburgh; I had wrote you one some little time before, directed to the Parliament-Close, have you got it? That you may never want Odes of mine to parody, I enclose you one to Fear,* nothing like it you will observe since the time of Pindar.

And now, my dear dear Boswell, I conclude, having, as I hope for mercy, not one word more to say, which I believe is often the case of many an enormous genius.

Farewell. Yours, &c.,

ANDREW ERSKINE.

* This Ode is not worth reprinting.—ED.

LETTER X.

Edinburgh, Dec. 8, 1761.

Dear ERSKINE,—It is a very strange thing, that I James Boswell, Esq., "who am happily possessed of a facility of manners,"—(to use the very words of Mr. Professor Smith,* which upon honour were addressed to me. I can produce the Letter in which they are to be found) I say it is a very strange thing that I should ever be at a loss how to express myself; and yet at this moment of my existence, that is really the case. May Lady B—— say unto me, "Boswell, I detest thee," if I am not in downright earnest.

Mankind are such a perverse race of beings, that they never fail to lay hold of every circumstance tending to their own praise, while they let slip every circumstance tending to their censure. To illustrate this by a recent example, you see I accurately remember Mr. Smith's beautiful, I shall even grant you just compliment, but have quite forgot his severe criticism on a sentence so clumsily formed, as to require an *I say* to keep it together; which I myself candidly think much resembles a pair of ill-mended breeches.

Having a mind, Erskine, to open a sluice of happiness upon you, I must inform you that I have lately got you an immensity of applause from men of the greatest taste.

* Adam Smith. Boswell had attended his classes on Moral Philosophy, when a student in the University of Glasgow.—ED.

You know I read rather better than any man in Britain; so that your works had a very uncommon advantage. I was pleased at the praise which you received. I was vain of having such a correspondent. I thought I did not envy you a bit, and yet, I don't know, I felt somehow, as if I could like to thresh you pretty heartily: however, I have one comfort, in thinking that all this praise would not have availed you a single curl of Sir Cloudesley Shovel's periwig,* had not I generously reported it to you: so that in reality you are obliged to me for it.

The second volume of the Poems will not be published till January. Captain Erskine will make a very good figure. Boswell a decent one.

Lady B—— intreats me to come and pass the Christmas holidays with her: guess, O guess! what transport I felt at reading that. I did not know how to contain my elevation of spirits. I thought myself one of the greatest geniuses in Europe. I thought I could write all sorts of books, and work at all handicraft trades. I imagined that I had fourscore millions of money out at interest, and that I should actually be chosen Pope at the next election. I obtest you, my friend, in the warmest spirit of love to return to her Ladyship my most sincere thanks, and tell her that when the planets permit us to meet, she herself shall judge how richly I can express my gratitude.

* "Sir Cloudesley Shovel's monument has very often given me great offence: instead of the brave, rough English Admiral, which was the distinguishing character of that plain, gallant man, he is represented on his tomb by the figure of a beau, dressed in a long periwig, and reposing himself upon velvet cushions under a canopy of state."—The "Spectator," No. 26.—ED.

Although I am a good deal of a Don Quixote, yet I feel myself averse to so long a journey. Believe me, I am as sweetly indolent as any genius in all his Majesty's dominions, so that for my own incitement I must propose the following scheme. You Captain Andrew shall, upon Monday the 28th day of this present month, set out from New-Tarbat in Mr. M——'s chaise, and meet me at Glasgow, that evening. Next day shall we both in friendly guise get into the said chaise, and drive with velocity to your present habitation, where I shall remain till the Monday sennight; on which day I shall be in like manner accompanied back to Glasgow, from thence to make my way as well as I can, to the Scottish metropolis. I have told the story of my scheme rather awkwardly; but it will have its advantages; I shall have a couple of days more of your classical company, and somewhat less to pay, which to a Poet is no slender consideration.

I shall chaise it the whole way. Thanks to the man who first invented that comfortable method of journeying. Had it not been for that, I dare say both you and I would have circumscribed our travels within a very few miles. For my own part, I think to dress myself in a great-coat and boots, and get astride a horse's back, and be jolted through the mire, perhaps in wind and rain, is a punishment too severe for all the offences which I can charge myself with. Indeed I have a mortal antipathy at riding, and that was the true reason for my refusing a regiment of dragoons which the King of Prussia offered me at the beginning of this war. I know indeed the Marischal Duke de Belleisle in his Political Testa-

ment,* has endeavoured to persuade the world that it was owing to my having a private amour with a Lady of distinction in the Austrian court, but that minister was too deeply immersed in state-intrigues, to know much about those of a more tender nature. The tumultuous hurry of business and ambition, left no room in his mind for the delicious delicacy of sentiment and passion, so very essential to a man of gallantry.

I think, Erskine, in this scheme of mine, I am playing a very sure game, for you must either indulge me in every article which I have mentioned, or entertain me with a plentiful dish of well drest apologies. I beg it of you, however, don't put yourself to any inconvenience; indeed I might have saved myself the trouble of making this request, for you are that kind of man that I believe you would not put yourself to an inconvenience to be made a Lieutenant-General. Pray shall we not see you here this winter at all? You ought to come and eat the fruit of your labours. I remain your most affectionate friend,

JAMES BOSWELL.

I shall rouse Donaldson as you desire. I shall rouse him like a peal of thunder.

I wonder what you will all think of this proposal of mine for delivering myself in Folio. Ten days make a period, as I use to say. They bear some proportion to the whole of life. Write instantly.

* "Avez-vous lu le *Testament politique du Maréchal de Belle-Isle?* C'est un ex-capucin de Rouen, nommé jadis Maubert, fripon, espion, escroc, menteur et ivrogne, ayant tous les talens de moinerie, qui a composé cet impertinent ouvrage."—Voltaire, Nov. 27, 1761.—ED.

*LETTER XI.

New-Tarbat, Dec. 13, 1761.

Dear BOSWELL,—An Ode to Tragedy by a gentleman of Scotland, and dedicated to you! had there been only one spark of curiosity in my whole composition, this would have raised it to a flame equal to the general conflagration. May G——d d——n me, as Lord Peter says,† if the edge of my appetite to know what it can be about, is not as keen as the best razor ever used by a member of the Soaping-Club. Go to Donaldson, demand from him two of my franks, and send it me even before the first post: write me, O write me! what sort of man this author is, where he was born, how he was brought up, and with what sort of diet he has been principally fed; tell me his genealogy, like Mr. M——; how many miles he has travelled in post-chaises, like Colonel R——; tell me what he eats, like a cook; what he drinks, like a wine-merchant; what shoes he wears, like a shoe-maker; in what manner his mother was delivered of him, like a man-midwife; and how his room is furnished, like an upholsterer; but if you happen to find it difficult to utter all this in terms befitting Mr. M——, Colonel R——, a

* This Letter was occasioned by seeing an Ode to Tragedy, written by a Gentleman of Scotland, and dedicated to James Boswell, Esq., advertised in the Edinburgh Newspapers. It afterwards appeared that the Ode was written by Mr. Boswell himself.

† In the "Tale of a Tub."—ED.

cook, a wine-merchant, a shoemaker, a man-midwife, and an upholsterer, Oh! tell it me all in your own manner, and in your own incomparable style.

Your scheme, Boswell, has met with—but the thoughts of this Ode-writing gentleman of Scotland again come across me,—I must now ask, like the Spectator, * is he fat or lean, tall or short, does he use spectacles? what is the length of his walking-stick? has he a landed estate? has he a good coal-work?—Lord! Lord! what a melancholy thing it is to live twenty miles from a post-town! why am I not in Edinburgh? why am I not chained to Donaldson's shop?

I received both your letters yesterday, for we send to the Post-house but once a week: I need not tell you how I liked them; were I to acquaint you with that, you would consecrate the pen with which they were written, and deify the inkhorn: I think the outside of one of them was adorned with the greatest quantity of good sealing-wax I ever saw, and my brother A—— and Lady A——, both of whom have a notable comprehension of these sort of things, agree with me in this my opinion.

Your Ode to Gluttony † is altogether excellent; the descriptions are so lively, that mistaking the paper on which they were written, for a piece of bread and butter

* "I have observed that a reader seldom peruses a book with pleasure, till he knows whether the writer of it be a black or a fair man, of a mild or choleric disposition, married or a bachelor, with other particulars of the like nature that conduce very much to the right understanding of an author."—"The Spectator," No. 1.—ED.

† He refers to the continuation of this Ode, which I have omitted in the present Edition.—ED.

spread with marmalade, I fairly swallowed the whole composition, and I find my stomach increased three-fold since that time; I declare it to be the most admirable whet in the world, superior to a solan goose, or white wine and bitters; it ought to be hung up in every cook's shop in the three kingdoms, engraved on pillars in all market places, and pasted in all rooms in all taverns.

You seem to doubt in your first letter, if ever Captain Erskine was better entertained by the great Donaldson, than you was lately; banish that opinion, tell it not in Gath; nor publish it in Askalon; repeat it not in John's Coffee-house, neither whisper it in the Abbey of Holy-rood-House; no, I shall never forget the fowls and oyster sauce which bedecked the board: fat were the fowls, and the oysters of the true pandour or croat kind; then the apple pie with raisins, and the mutton with cauli-flower, can never be erased from my remembrance; I may forget my native country, my dear brothers and sisters, my poetry, my art of making love, and even you, O Boswell! but these things I can never forget; the impression is too deep, too well imprinted ever to be effaced; I may turn Turk or Hottentot, I may be hanged for stealing a bag to adorn my hair, I may ravish all sorts of virgins, young and old, I may court the fattest Wapping landlady, but these things I can never forget; I may be sick and in prison, I may be deaf, dumb, and may lose my memory, but these things I can never forget.

And now, Boswell, I am to acquaint you, that your proposal is received with the utmost joy and festivity, and the scheme, if I live till to-morrow fortnight, will be put

in execution. The New-Tarbat chaise will arrive at Glasgow on Monday evening the 28th of December, drove by William. Captain Andrew's slim personage will slip out, he will enquire for James Boswell, Esq.; he will be shewn into the room where he is sitting before a large fire, the evening being cold, raptures and poetry will ensue, and every man will soap his own beard; every other article of the proposals will be executed as faithfully as this; but to speak very seriously, you must be true to your appointment, and come with the utmost regularity upon the Monday; think of my emotions at Græme's, if you should not come; view my melancholy posture; hark! I rave like Lady Wishfort,* no Boswell yet, Boswell's a lost thing. I must receive a letter from you before I set out, telling me whether you keep true to your resolution, and pray send me the Ode to Tragedy: I beg you'll bring me out in your pocket my Critical Review, which you may desire Donaldson to give you; but above all, employ Donaldson to get me a copy of Fingal,† which tell him I'll pay him for; I long to see it.

There are some things lately published in London, which I would be glad to have, particularly a Spousal Hymn on the marriage of the King and Queen, and an Elegy on viewing a ruined Pile of Buildings; see what you can do for me; I know you will not take it ill to be busied a little for that greatest of all Poets Captain Andrew.

The sluice of happiness you have let in upon me, has

* In "The Way of the World," by Congreve.—ED.

† The first volume of Macpherson's "Fingal" was published this winter.—ED.

quite overflowed the shallows of my understanding; at this moment I am determined to write more and print more than any man in the kingdom, except the great Dr. Hill, who writes a Folio every month, a Quarto every fortnight, an Octavo every week, and a Duodecimo every day. * Hogarth has humourously represented a brawny porter almost sinking to the ground under a huge load of his works. I am too lazy just now to copy out an Ode to Indolence, which I have lately written; besides, it's fitting I reserve something for you to peruse when we meet, for upon these occasions an exchange of Poems ought to be as regular as an exchange of prisoners between two nations at war. Believe me, dear Boswell, to be yours sincerely,

ANDREW ERSKINE.

P.S.—Pray write me before I set out for Glasgow.—The Ode to Tragedy, by a gentleman of Scotland, good now! wonderful!

LETTER XII.

Edinburgh, Saturday, Dec. 14, 1761.

Dear ERSKINE,—If my scheme takes, you must alter it. Thursday the 24th must be the day of our meeting, as I am obliged to return hither on Saturday the 2nd of January. This is really a curious way of employing you;

* "Would you believe, what I know is fact, that Dr. Hill earned fifteen guineas a week by working for wholesale dealers? He was at once employed on six voluminous works of Botany, Husbandry, &c., published weekly."—Horace Walpole, date of Jan. 3, 1761.—ED.

however, you will gain something by it; you will acquire a particular exactness in knowing the days of the month, a science too much neglected in these degenerate days, but a science which was cultivated with a glorious ardour in Greece and Rome, and was no doubt the cause of their flourishing so much in every respect.

I am yours sincerely,

JAMES BOSWELL.

LETTER XIII.

Edinburgh, Dec. 17, 1761.

Dear ERSKINE,—Had you but hinted a method of conveyance sooner than by the first post, sooner should the Ode to Tragedy have saluted your longing eyes.

At length it comes! it comes! Hark! with what lofty music do the spheres proclaim its triumphal entry into the majestic edifice at Tarbat! Behold the family gathered around it in a sort of quadrangular figure! Heavens! what a picture of curiosity! what a group of eager expectants! They show their teeth, they rub their hands, they kick the floor! But who is this the fire of whose look flames infinitely beyond the rest? It is Captain Andrew! It is! it is! ye Gods! he seizes! he opens! he reads! Let us leave him. I can no more. It would stretch the strings too far to proceed. You must know I purposely neglected to send the Ode myself, and likewise prevented Donaldson from sending it immediately when it was published, in order to give full play to your impatience. I considered what amazing effects it must

produce upon Captain Erskine, to find in one advertisement, An Ode to Tragedy—A Gentleman of Scotland—Alexander Donaldson—and James Boswell, Esq. How far my conjecture was just, your last letter does most amply testify.

The author of the Ode to Tragedy, is a most excellent man: he is of an ancient family in the west of Scotland, upon which he values himself not a little. At his nativity there appeared omens of his future greatness. His parts are bright, and his education has been good. He has travelled in post-chaises, miles without number. He is fond of seeing much of the world. He eats of every good dish, especially apple-pie. He drinks old hock. He has a very fine temper. He is somewhat of an humorist, and a little tinctured with pride. He has a good manly countenance, and he owns himself to be amorous. He has infinite vivacity, yet is observed at times to have a melancholy cast. He is rather fat than lean, rather short than tall, rather young than old. His shoes are neatly made, and he never wears spectacles. The length of his walking-stick is not as yet ascertained; but we hope soon to favour the republic of letters with a solution of this difficulty, as several able mathematicians are employed in its investigation, and for that purpose have posted themselves at different given points in the Cannongate, so that when the gentleman saunters down to the Abbey of Holyrood-house, in order to think on ancient days, on King James the Fifth, and on Queen Mary, they may compute its altitude above the street, according to the rules of geometry.

I hope you have received a line from me fixing Thursday the 24th, as the day of our meeting. I exult in the prospect of felicity that is before us. Fingal and your Critical Review shall accompany me. I will not anticipate your pleasure in reading the Highland bard; only take my word for it, he will make you feel that you have a soul. I shall remember your other commissions. Continue to trust me till you find me negligent.

I beg it of you, for once, be a Frenchman, and in the character of Boswell, kneel, supplicate, worship Lady B——. I remain, your affectionate Friend,

JAMES BOSWELL.

LETTER XIV.

New-Tarbat, Dec. 16, 1761.

Dear BOSWELL,—Swift as pen can scratch, or ink can flow, as floods can rush, or winds can blow, which you'll observe is a very pretty rhyme, I sit down on a chair which has really a very bad bottom, being made of wood, and answer your epistle which I received this moment; it is dated on Saturday the 14th, which was really the 12th, according to the computation of the best chronologists: this is a blunder which Sir Isaac Newton would never have excused; but I a man no less great, forgive it from my soul; and I here declare, that I will never upbraid you with it in any company or conversation, even though that conversation should turn upon the quickest and most pleasant method of swallowing oysters, when you know I might very naturally introduce it.

I confess it is singularly silly in me to turn the page in this manner, and that I should have followed your example, or rather ensample, as some great judges of style usually write it. I see by the newspapers, that Fingal is to be published at Edinburgh in a few days, pray bring it with you.

I will undoubtedly meet you at Glasgow on the 24th day of the month, being exactly that day which precedes Christmas, as was ingeniously observed by Mr. Sheridan in his fourth Lecture;* and I hear he is going to publish a whole volume of discoveries all as notable as this, which I imagine will exceed his lectures greatly.

Pray now be faithful to this appointment, and so I commit this letter to the guidance of Providence, hoping that it will not miscarry, or fail of being duly delivered.

Believe me yours sincerely,

ANDREW ERSKINE.

LETTER XV.

New-Tarbat, Jan. 10, 1762.

Dear BOSWELL,—The storms of night descended, the winds rolled along the clouds with all their ghosts, around the rock the dark waves burst, and shewed their flaming bosoms, loud rushed the blast through the leafless oaks, and the voice of the spirit of the mountains was heard in our halls; it was Saturday, when lo! at once the postman came, mighty was his striding in the kitchen, and strong

* "Course of Lectures on Elocution," by Thomas Sheridan, M.A. London, 1762.—ED.

was his voice for ale. In short, I have as yet received no letter from you, and great is my wonder and astonishment, even Donaldson has not sent me my Critical Review; would to God he had one rap from Fingal's sword of Luno.

I feel myself at this present moment capable of writing a letter which would delight you, but I am determined not to do it, and this is the severe punishment of your neglect, I withhold the treasures of my wit and humour from you, a perfect Golconda mine of Diamonds.

I have been enjoying since you left me, the most exquisite entertainment, in the perusal of the noble works of Ossian, the greatest poet, in my opinion, that ever composed, and who exceeds Homer, Virgil, and Milton. He transports us by the grandeur of his sublime, or by some sudden start of tenderness he melts us into distress. Who can read, without the warmest emotions, the pathetic complaints of the venerable old bard, when he laments his blindness, and the death of his friends? But how are we animated when the memory of former years comes rushing on his mind, and the light of the song rises in his soul. It is quite impossible to express my admiration of his Poems; at particular passages I felt my whole frame trembling with ecstasy; but if I was to describe all my thoughts, you would think me absolutely mad. The beautiful wildness of his fancy is inexpressibly agreeable to the imagination; for instance, the mournful sound from the untouched harp when a hero is going to fall, or the awful appearances of his ghosts and spirits.

Notwithstanding all these beauties, we shall still con-

tinue pedants, and Homer and Virgil will be read and quoted, when Ossian shall be totally forgot; this, without the gift of prophecy, I can foresee; much could I enlarge upon this subject, but this must not be a long letter. Believe me

Yours sincerely,

ANDREW ERSKINE.

LETTER XVI.

Edinburgh, Jan. 11, 1762.

Dear ERSKINE,—Instead of endeavouring to excuse myself for neglecting so long to write, I shall present you with some original conjectures of my own, upon the way and manner in which you have been affected upon this present occasion. And here I must premise, that in so doing I shall not follow the formal and orderly method of Bishop Latimer, in his sermons before King Edward the Sixth; but, on the contrary, shall adopt the easy, desultory style of one whom at present I shall not venture to name, but leave that to some future ingenious commentator on the epistolary correspondence of the Hon. Andrew Erskine and James Boswell, Esq.

Either you have been sunk into a frigid state of listless indifference, and gone whistling up and down the room upon a fife, and murmuring at intervals, while you took breath; let him do as he likes, let him please himself; yes, yes, let him soap his own beard. Or you have felt

the most delicate pangs of afflicted sensibility, and uttered tender tales of woe in softly plaintive numbers.

> The savage bard returns no humorous line,
> No Tragic Ode now sooths my soul to rest;
> In vain I fly to Lady B——'s wine,
> Nor can a hearty supper make me blest.

Or you have burned, raged, and fried like the thrice-amorous swain in the renowned English translation of Voi Amante, and perhaps thundered forth all the Anathemas which Tristram Shandy has borrowed from the church of Rome, and transferred to poor Obadiah.

By this time, the storm is blown over. This merry letter has made you grin, and show every expression of laughter. You are now in very good humour, and are in all human probability saying to yourself, My good friend Boswell, is a most excellent correspondent. It is true he is indolent, and *dissipated*, as the celebrated Parson Brown,* of Carlisle says, and he frequently is a little negligent: but when he does write, ye Gods! how he does write! in short, to sing him his own inimitable song, "There is no better fellow alive."

I remain

Yours sincerely,

JAMES BOSWELL.

* Dr. John Brown, the author of "An Estimate of the Manners and Principles of the Times."—ED.

LETTER XVII.

New-Tarbat, Jan. 20, 1762.

Dear BOSWELL,—It is a kind of maxim, or rule in life, never to begin a thing without having an eye towards the conclusion; certainly this rule was never better observed than in your last letter, in which indeed I am apt to think you kept the conclusion rather too much in view, or perhaps you forgot the beginning altogether, which is not unfrequently the case with you; but you do these things with so little compunction, that I shall very soon cease to forgive you, and answer you in the same manner. It is to be feared, that the dissolution of our correspondence will immediately follow, or dwindle into half a page of your text hand, which I always looked upon as a detestable invention: if all this that I dread happens, we shall then cease to be reckoned men of LETTERS.

I find it recorded in the history of the eastern Roman Empire, that it was the custom whenever the inhabitants of Constantinople mutinied for want of bread, to whip all the bakers through the city, which always appeased the populace; in like manner, Boswell, I having dreamt a few nights ago, that I had whipt you severely, find my wrath and resentment very much mollified; not so much indeed I confess, as if I had really had the pleasure of actually correcting you, but however I am pretty well satisfied. You was quite mistaken as to the manner I bore your silence; I only thought it was a little droll.

Donaldson tells me, that he wants thirty or forty pages to complete his volume; pray don't let him insert any

nonsense to fill it up, but try John Home* and John R——, who I hear is a very good poet; you may also hint the thing to Mr. N——, and to my brother, Lord K——, who has some excellent poems by him.

Since I saw you, I received a letter from Mr. D——; it is filled with encomiums upon you: he says there is a great deal of humility in your vanity, a great deal of tallness in your shortness, and a great deal of whiteness in your black complexion. He says there is a great deal of poetry in your prose, and a great deal of prose in your poetry. He says, that as to your late publication, there is a great deal of Ode in your dedication, and a great deal of dedication in your Ode; it would amaze you to see how D—— keeps up this see-saw, which you'll remark has prodigious wit in it. He says there is a great deal of coat in your waistcoat, and a great deal of waistcoat in your coat; that there is a great deal of liveliness in your stupidity, and a great deal of stupidity in your liveliness; but to write you all he says, would require rather more fire in my grate, than there is at present; and my fingers would undoubtedly be numbed, for there is a great deal of snow in this frost, and a great deal of frost in this snow: in short, upon this occasion he writes like a Christian and a Poet, and a Physician and an Orator, and a Jew.

Pray, Boswell, tell me particularly in your first letter, how Fingal has been received; that book will serve me as a criterion, to discover the taste of the present age. Boswell, imitate me in your writing; observe how closely the lines are joined, how near the words are written to

* The author of "Douglas."—ED.

one another, and how small the letters are formed; I am praiseworthy in this particular. Adieu. Yours sincerely,

ANDREW ERSKINE.

LETTER XVIII.

Edinburgh, Jan. 22, 1762.

Dear ERSKINE,—I would not for all the books in Donaldson's shop that our correspondence should cease. Rather, much rather would I trot a horse in the hottest day in summer, between Fort George and Aberdeen; rather, much rather would I hold the office of him who every returning noon plays upon the music-bells of the good town of Edinburgh;* and rather, much rather would I be condemned to pass the next seven years of my life, as a spiritless student at the college of Glasgow.

Let our wit, my friend, continue to shine in a succession of brilliant sparkles. Let there be no more distance between each flash of vivacity, but what is necessary for giving time to observe its splendid radiance. I hope I shall never again approach so near the clod of clay. I hope the fire of my genius shall never again be so long in kindling, or so much covered up with the dross of stupidity.

I have desired Donaldson to cause his correspondent

* "All the people of business at Edinburgh, and even the genteel company may be seen standing in crowds every day, from one to two in the afternoon, in the open street. * * * The company are entertained with a variety of tunes, played upon a set of bells, fixed in a steeple hard by. As these bells are well toned, and the musician, who has a salary from the city for playing upon them with keys, is no bad performer, the entertainment is really agreeable, and very striking to the ears of a stranger."—"Humphry Clinker," vol. ii., p. 223.—ED.

at London, to send a copy of the first volume of his collection to each of the Reviews, that is to say, to Hamilton * and Griffiths, with whose names the slate-blue covers of these awful oracles of criticism are inscribed.

Donaldson has yet about thirty-six pages of the second Volume to print. I have given him two hundred lines more. He is a loadstone of prodigious power, and attracts all my poetic needles. The Volume will be out next week; the different pieces of which it is composed are, to be sure, not all of equal merit. But is not that the case in every miscellaneous collection, even in that excellent one published by Mr. Dodsley? The truth is, that a volume printed in a small type exhausts an infinite quantity of *copy* (to talk technically) so that we must not be over-nice in our choice, nor think every man in our ranks below size, who does not come up to the elevated standard of Captain Andrew.

D——'s encomiums have rendered my humility still prouder; they are indeed superb, and worthy of an opposer of the German war. I suppose they have not lost a bit of beef by their long journey, and I should imagine that the Highland air has agreed well with them, and that they have agreed well with the Highland air. They occasioned much laughter in my heart, and much heart in my laughter.

* Hamilton was the proprietor of "The Critical Review." Its first editor was Smollett. Griffiths was the proprietor of "The Monthly Review." Goldsmith worked for him for some time. Griffiths was fool enough to venture, with the aid of his wife, to correct Goldsmith's compositions.—See Forster's "Life of Goldsmith."—ED.

They have at last given over marrying me; so that I am going about like a horse wanting a halter, ready to be bridled and saddled by the first person who is so very fortunate as to lay hold of me. A simile not to be found in any author ancient or modern.

We had a splendid ball at the Abbey of Holyrood-house, on the Queen's birthday, given by Colonel Graeme. I exhibited my existence in a minuet, and as I was dressed in a full chocolate suit, and wore my most solemn countenance, I looked as you used to tell me, like the fifth act of a deep Tragedy. Lord K—— danced with Miss C——, by the fire of whose eyes, his melodious lordship's heart is at present in a state of combustion. Such is the declaration which he makes in loud whispers many a time and oft.

Our friend H—— S—— is in town this winter. He is a most surprising old fellow. I am told he is some years past sixty; and yet he has all the vivacity and frolic, and whim of the sprightliest youth. He continues to rank all mankind under the general denomination of Gilbert. He patrols the streets at midnight as much as ever, and beats with as much vigour the town-guard drum; nor is his affection for the company of blind fiddlers, in the least abated.

Fingal has been very warmly received at London. A second edition of it is just now come out. The public taste you will allow is good at present: long may it last. Long may the voice of the venerable bard be heard with unaffected pleasure.

I see your regiment is ordered for England. I hope

you will be allowed to recruit, or have leave of absence, as it would be very severe upon you to be moved from your present situation.

If you will number the lines in our pages, you will find I have twenty-three, whereas you have only eighteen.

I enclose you the sorrowful lamentation of a stabler called Hutchison, who, on Wednesday last was whipt through this town, for forcing away a young man as a recruit, and beating him unmercifully. The said lamentation you will find is in verse; and although sold for a single penny, is a work of remarkable merit. The exordium is a passionate address to Captains all; amongst whom, who can more properly be reckoned than Captain Andrew?

I remain your sincere friend,

JAMES BOSWELL.

LETTER XIX.

Morpeth, Feb. 7th, 1762.

Dear BOSWELL,—And lo I am at Morpeth, after meeting with every accident that could possibly happen to a man in a post-chaise, overturns, breaking of springs, dropping of wheels, and sticking in roads, though with four horses. We imagine we are to remain in this town some time. Upon looking over my poems, in the second volume, I find several errors; I'm afraid you have not corrected the press so violently as you boasted.

Perhaps, Boswell, this will be the worst and the shortest letter I ever wrote to you; I'm writing in an inn, and

half-a-dozen people in the room; but when I'm settled in lodgings of my own, expect epistles in the usual style. I think you two or three times have treated me as I treat you now, so

I remain your most humble servant,
And affectionate friend,
ANDREW ERSKINE.

P.S.—Never was there such a tame subjected performance as this.

LETTER XX.

Morpeth, Feb. 8, 1762.

Dear BOSWELL,—I beg you will get a copy of the second volume of the Poems, and send me it by the man who brings you this; let it be a neat one, well-bound: pray tell me what people say of the book. Your currant-jelly is good, has a delicious flavour, and tastes much of the fruit, as my aunts say. I did not make out all the names in your Race-Ballad cleverly.

I am still in the way I was, when I wrote you last, in a public-house, and pestered with noise: I have not above six ideas at present, and none of them fit for a letter. Dear Boswell, farewell! pray for my recovery from this lethargy of spirits and sense which has seized me.

Yours, &c.
ANDREW ERSKINE.

LETTER XXI.

Edinburgh, Feb. 16, 1762.

Dear ERSKINE,—To see your brother —— at Morpeth, will, I dare say, surprise you as much as it did me, to find him here. In short, nothing will serve him but a sight of the British capital, although he is already much better acquainted with it than either you or I.

What has at present instigated him I own I am puzzled to discover: but I solemnly and merrily declare, that I never yet saw anybody so excessively enamoured of London. The effects of this violent passion are deeply impressed upon every feature in his countenance, his nose not excepted, which is absolutely most surprising. His body is tossed and shaken like one afflicted with the hot fit of an ague, or the severest paroxysms of convulsion. Then as to his mind, it is altogether distempered. He is perpetually declaiming on the magnificence, the liberty, and the pleasure, which reigns in the imperial British metropolis. He swears, that in that glorious place alone we can enjoy life. He says, there is no breathing beyond St. James's; and he affirms, that the air of that delicious spot is celestial. He says, there is no wit except at the Bedford; no military genius but at George's; no wine but at the Star and Garter; no turbot except at the Tilt-Yard. He asserts, that there are no clothes made beyond the liberties of Westminster; and

he firmly holds Cheapside to be the sole mart of stockings. It would fill up two-thirds of a quarto volume to enumerate the various extravagant exclamations into which he breaks out. He declares that for his own part, he will never go to church except to St. Paul's, nor to a lady's private lodgings, except in the neighbourhood of Soho-square.

I beg it of you, my friend, be very attentive to him; observe his appearance and behaviour with the greatest accuracy, so that between us we may be able to have a pretty just notion of this wonderful affair, and may faithfully draw up his case to be read before the Royal Society, and transmitted to posterity in these curious annals the Philosophical Transactions.

I have sent you the second volume, which Donaldson begs leave to present you with, in consideration of your being one of those who bear the brunt of the day. He has also done me the same honour. No plain shop copy; no, no, elegantly bound and gilt.

Adieu, yours sincerely,

JAMES BOSWELL.

LETTER XXII.

Morpeth, March 2, 1762.

Oh, BOSWELL! if you found yourself in the middle of the Firth of Forth, and the sea fast up-springing through every leak, after the skipper had remonstrated, in the most warm manner, against proceeding to cross the water;

or if, like me, you found yourself in the midst of a sentence, without knowing how to end it, you could not feel more pain than I do at this instant: in short, I have had a very excellent letter of yours in my left waistcoat-pocket this fortnight; is that letter answered? you say: Oh! let the reply to this question be buried in the bottom of the Red Sea, where I hope no future army will ever disturb it; or let it be inserted in the third volume of Donaldson's Collection, where it will never be found, as the book will never be opened. What would I not do to gain your pardon? I would even swear that black was white; that's to say, I would praise the fairness of your complexion.

By that smile which irradiates your countenance, like a gleam of the moon through the black clouds of the south; by the melting of that pomatum which gives your hair a gloss, like the first beaming of a new suit of regimentals on an assembly night, when twenty fiddlers sweat; by the grandeur of your pinchbeck buckles; by the solemnity of your small nose; by the blue expended in washing your shirts; by the rotundity of your Bath great-coat; by the well-polished key of your portmanteau; by the tag of your shoe; by the tongue of your buckle; by your tailor's bill; by the last kiss of Miss C——; by the first guinea you ever had in your possession; and chiefly by all the nonsense you have just read, let the kneeling Captain find favour in your eyes, and then, my Ode to Goodnature shall be inscribed to you, while your Ode to Ingratitude (which, I suppose, is finished) shall be burnt.

I was, as you imagine, very much surprised to see A—— here; I noted him, according to your direction,

with a critical eye; like a gentleman in a line which you may remember I made on the Castle-hill, he seemed to have taken the Tower of London for his bride; every feature and every limb was changed wonderfully; his nose resembled Westminster-Bridge; his cheeks were like Bloomsbury-Square; his high forehead like Constitution-Hill; his chin like China-Row; his tongue and his teeth looked like Almack's in Pall-Mall; his lips like the Shakespeare's Head; his fists like Hockley-in-the-Hole; his ears like the Opera-House; his eyes like a harlequin entertainment; his stomach was like Craven-Street; his chest like the trunk-maker's in the corner of St. Paul's-Church-yard; the calf of his leg like Leadenhall-market; his pulse like the Green-market in Covent-Garden; his neck like Tyburn; and his gait like Newgate; his navel like Fleet-street; and his lungs and his bladder were like Blowbladder-street: everything about him seemed metamorphosed; he had moulded his hat into the form of the Mansion-House; some guineas which he had, looked like the 'Change; but it would be tedious to relate every particular; however, I must not let his conversation be forgot, though it was much of a piece with that you so humorously relate: he swore to me he never saw a rag fit for a gentleman to wear, but in Rag-fair; he said there was no scolding but at Billingsgate; and he avowed there were no bad poets but in Grub-street; I could not stand that, I bid him call to remembrance an acquaintance of his who lived in the Parliament-Close, and also a relation of his who formerly resided in Campbell's Land; he smiled, and confessed these were really very bad poets,

but that he was not convinced for all that; upon this, to put the matter out of all dispute, I offered to lend him the first and second volumes of Donaldson's Collection. At that very moment the hostler informed him the chaise was ready, and he still remains ignorant where the worst poets in the world are. Tell me how our second volume is received; I was much pleased with N——'s lines; how did he get them inserted? I intend writing a criticism upon the volume, and upon your writings in particular, so tremble.

Dear Boswell, farewell,

Yours most affectionately,

ANDREW ERSKINE.

P.S.—I hope you'll write to me soon.

LETTER XXIII.

Edinburgh, March 9, 1762.

Dear ERSKINE,—Can a man walk up the Cowgate after a heavy rain without dirtying his shoes? I might have said the soles of his shoes:—and, indeed, to put the matter beyond dispute, I would yet have you to understand me so; for although nothing is so common as to use a part for the whole; yet if you should be out of humour with a bad dinner, a bad lodging, an ill-dressed shirt, or an ill-printed book, you might be disposed to cavil, and object, that in critical precision of language, (supposing a man to walk slow) he could not be said to have dirtied his shoes,

no more than a boarding-school girl, who has cut her finger in paring an apple, could be said to have mangled her carcase.

But to proceed; can a man make a pilgrimage to the Holy Land from the Island of Great Britain, without the aid of navigation? Can a man walk in the Mall at noon, carrying his breeches upon an enormous long pole, without being laughed at? Can a man of acknowledged ignorance and stupidity, write a tragedy superior to Hamlet? or a genteel comedy superior to the Careless Husband?* I need not wait for an answer. No word but no, will do: it is self-evident. No more, my friend, can he who is lost in dissipation, write a letter. I am at present so circumstanced; accept this short line in answer to your last, and write very soon to

Your affectionate Friend,

JAMES BOSWELL.

LETTER XXIV.

New-Tarbat, April 15, 1762.

Dear BOSWELL,—The sun which rose on Wednesday last, with his first beams beheld you set out for Auchinleck, but he did not see me arrive in Edinburgh; however, he was good-natured enough to lend a little light to the moon, by the help of which, about twelve at night I landed at Peter Ramsay's: the thoughts of seeing you

* By Colley Cibber. "Who upon earth has written such perfect comedies (as Molière)? for the 'Careless Husband' is but one."—Horace Walpole, Aug. 29, 1785.—ED.

next day kept up my spirits, during a stage of seventeen miles. William he snored; I called upon you, after being refreshed with soft slumbers, in which my guardian genius did not inform me of your absence: but oh! when the maid told me you was gone, what were my emotions! she beholding me affected in a most supreme degree, tried to administer comfort to me, and plainly told me, that you would be very sorry you had missed me, this delivered in an elegant manner, soothed me prodigiously.

I began writing this at Graham's in Glasgow, but was interrupted by a jowl of Salmon; every thing there reminded me of you. I was in the same room you and I were in, you seemed placed before me, your face beamed a black ray upon me.

I am now at New-Tarbat, once more returned to the scenes of calm retirement, and placid meditation, as Mr. Samuel Johnson says in the Idler.* We all wish to have you here, and we all agree in thinking that there is nothing to hinder you to come.

I must beg your pardon seriously for not writing to you, but I was really in such bad spirits, and such ill temper, at that cursed place Morpeth, that it was impossible; but I assure you I will make up terribly. I am recruiting again; I believe our regiment won't go abroad this summer. I was glad to see by the London newspapers, that Mr. Robert Dodsley had at last published

* "I am now, as I could wish every man of wisdom and virtue to be, in the regions of calm content and placid meditation."—"The Idler," No. 71.—ED.

your Cub: Mr. H—— showed me a very severe Epigram that somebody in London had written upon it. You know it is natural to take a lick at a Cub. Pray come to us. I cannot all at once come into the way of letter-writing again, so I must conclude,

Dear Boswell,

Your affectionate friend,

ANDREW ERSKINE.

LETTER XXV.

Auchinleck, April 22, 1762.

Dear ERSKINE,—This is a strange world that we live in. Things turn out in a very odd manner. Every day produces something more wonderful than another. Earthquakes, murders, conflagrations, inundations, jubilees, operas, marriages, and pestilence, unite to make mortal men gape and stare. But your last letter and mine being wrote on the same day, astonishes me still more than all these things put together.

This is the most unaccountable rhodomontade that I ever uttered. I am really dull at present, and my affectation to be clever, is exceedingly awkward. My manner resembles that of a footman who has got an ensign's commission, or a kept mistress who is made a wife.

I have not at any time been more insipid, more muddy, and more standing-water like than I am just now, The country is my aversion. It renders me quite torpid. Were you here just now, you would behold your vivacious

friend a most stupid exhibition. It is very surprising that the country should affect me so; whether it be that the scenes to be met with there, fall infinitely short of my ideas of pastoral simplicity; or that I have acquired so strong a relish for the variety and hurry of a town life, as to languish in the stillness of retirement; or that the atmosphere is too moist and heavy, I shall not determine.

I have now pretty good hopes of getting soon into the guards, that gay scene of life of which I have been so long and so violently enamoured. Surely this will cause you to rejoice.

I have lately had the pleasure and the pride of receiving a most brilliant epistle from Lady B——. It excels Captain Andrew's letters by many degrees. I have picked as many diamonds out of it, as to make me a complete set of buckles; I have turned so much of it into brocade waistcoats, and so much into a very rich suit of embroidered horse-furniture. I know how unequal I am to the task of answering it; nevertheless present her Ladyship with the inclosed. It may amuse her a little. It is better to have two shillings in the pound, than nothing at all.

I was really shocked at the lethargy of our correspondence. Let it now be renovated with increase of spirit, so that I may not only subscribe myself your sincere friend, but your witty companion,

JAMES BOSWELL.

LETTER XXVI.

New-Tarbat, May 1, 1762.

Well then, my friend, you leave the bar,
Resolv'd on drums, on dress, and war,
While fancy paints in liveliest hues,
Swords, sashes, shoulder-knots, reviews,
You quit the study of the laws,
And show a blade in Britain's cause,
Of length to throw into a trance,
The frighten'd kings of Spain and France!
A hat of fiercest cock is sought,
And your cockade's already bought,
While on your coat there beams a lace,
That might a captain-general grace!

For me, who never show admir'd,
Or very long ago was tir'd,
I can with face unmov'd behold,
A scarlet suit with glittering gold;
And tho' a son of war and strife,
Detest the listless languid life;
Then coolly, Sir, I say repent,
And in derision hold a tent;
Leave not the sweet poetic band,
To scold recruits, and pore on Bland,*

* Humphrey Bland, author of "Military Discipline," (1727). He served under the Duke of Marlborough. Was present also at the battles of Dettingen and Fontenoy. Became colonel of the Second Dragoon Guards.—ED.

Our military books won't charm ye,
Not even th' enchanting list o' th' army.

Trust me, 'twill be a foolish sight,
To see you facing to the right;
And then, of all your sense bereft,
Returning back unto the left;
Alas! what transport can you feel,
In turning round on either heel?
Much sooner would I choose indeed,
To see you standing on your head;
Or with your breeches off to rub
Foul clothes, and dance within a tub.

Besides, my dear Boswell, we find in all history ancient and modern, lawyers are very apt to run away. Demosthenes the Greek, writer to the signet, who managed the great suit against Philip of Macedon, fairly scoured off, I think, at the battle of Cheronea; and Cicero, the Roman advocate is universally accused of cowardice. I am not indeed ignorant that some of your ancestors behaved well at Flodden;* but as they lost the day, I think the omen but bad, and as they were killed, I think that makes the omen still worse; however, perhaps you don't think so, and I allow that argument to be very convincing, and rather

* "Thomas Boswell obtained from James IV., as a signal mark of royal favour, the estate of Auchinleck. He was slain at Flodden." —"Memoir of James Boswell," by Rev. C. Rogers, p. 3.—ED.

more conclusive, than if you had said, "I don't know that."

You complain much of the country, and you assign various reasons for disliking it; among others, you imagine the atmosphere too moist and heavy; I agree with you in that opinion, all the black clouds in the sky are continually pressing upon you, for as the proverb says, Like draws to like. Believe me, I have sometimes taken you at a distance, for the pillar of smoke which used to accompany the Israelites out of Egypt; it would be impossible to tell how many things I have taken you for at different times; sometimes I have taken you for the witches' cauldron in Macbeth; this resemblance was in some degree warranted by your figure and shape; sometimes for an enormous ink-bottle; sometimes for a funeral procession; now and then for a chimney sweeper, and not unfrequently for a black-pudding. For my part, Boswell, I must confess I am fond of the country to a degree; things there are not so artificially disguised as in towns, real sentiments are discovered, and the passions play naturally and without restraint. As for example, it was only in the country I could have found out Lady J——'s particular attachment to the tune of *Appie Mac-Nab;* in the town, no doubt, she would have pretended a great liking for Voi Amante; in the town, I never would have seen Lady B—— go out armed for fear of the Turkey-cock, which is her daily practice here, and leaves room for numberless reflections: she cannot eat Turkeys when roasted or boiled; and she dreads them when alive so much, that she displays every forenoon a

cudgel to them, fitted by its size to strike terror into a bull, or a butting cow. What can her keeping of Turkeys be owing to? Assuredly to vanity, which is of such an insinuating nature, that we are apt very often to meet it where we least expect it; I have seen it in an old shoe, in a dirty shirt, in a long nose, a crooked leg, and a red face. So much it seemed good for me to say upon the subject of vanity, supporting by the most irrefragable arguments, the doctrine of Solomon.

We had a visit from Mr. C—— of S—— here this morning; he came in a chaise drawn by four bay horses; I am certain of the number, you may draw what inference you please from this intelligence, I give you only a simple narration of the fact. I am surprised you say nothing of my proposal of your coming here, and still more that you say nothing of your Cub. Why don't you send me a copy? We were all so much entertained with your letter to Lady B——, that I was really seized with a qualm of envy; we regard it as one of those efforts of genius, which are only produced by a fine flow of spirits, a beautiful day, and a good pen.

I pray you, Boswell, note well this sheet of paper, its size is magnificent: If Lady B—— was possessed of such an extent of plain ground, she would undoubtedly throw it into a lawn, and plant it with clumps of trees, she would vary it with fish-ponds, and render it rural with flocks; here, where I am writing, might a cow feed; here might be an arbour; here, perhaps, might you recline at full length; by the edge of this stream might the Captain walk, and in this corner, might Lady B—— give orders

to her shepherds. I am drawn in the most irresistible manner to conclude, by the external impulse of the cloth's being laid, and by the internal impulse of being hungry. Believe me, Boswell, to be in the most unconscionable manner, your affectionate friend,

ANDREW ERSKINE.

P.S.—I send you franks, which return filled with the utmost wit and humour.

LETTER XXVII.

Auchinleck, May 4, 1762.

* For military operation
I have a wondrous inclination;
Ev'n when a boy, with cheerful glee,
The red-coats march I used to see;
With joy beheld the corporals drill,
The men upon the Castle-hill;
And at the sound of drum and fife,
Felt an unusual flow of life.
Besides, my honest friend, you know
I am a little of a beau.
I'm sure, my friend need not be told,
That Boswell's hat was edg'd with gold;

* I have omitted the first eighty lines of this poem.—ED.

And that a shining bit of lace,
My brownish-colour'd suit did grace;
And that mankind my hair might see,
Powder'd at least two days in three.
My pinchbeck buckles are admir'd
By all who are with taste inspir'd.
Trophies of Gallic pride appear,
The crown to every Frenchman dear,
And the enchanting fleur de lis,
The flower of flowers you must agree;
While for variety's sweet sake,
And witty Charles's tale to wake,
The curious artist interweaves
A twisted bunch of oaken leaves.

Tell me, dear Erskine, should not I
My favourite path of fortune try?
Our life, my friend, is very short,
A little while is all we've for't;
And he is blest who can beguile,
With what he likes, that little while.

My fondness for the guards must appear very strange to you, who have a rooted antipathy at the glare of scarlet. But I must inform you, that there is a city called London, for which I have as violent an affection as the most romantic lover ever had for his mistress. There a man may indeed soap his own beard, and enjoy whatever is to be had in this transitory state of things. Every agreeable whim may be freely indulged without censure.

I hope, however, you will not impute my living in England, to the same cause for which Hamlet was advised to go there; because the people were all as mad as himself.

I long much for another of our long conversations on a fine forenoon, after breakfast, while the sun sheds light and gladness around us. Believe me,

Yours sincerely,

JAMES BOSWELL.

LETTER XXVIII.

Auchinleck, May 8, 1762.

Dear ERSKINE,—I should have wondered very much, had I been told of Lady J——'s particular attachment to the tune of *Appie Mac-nab*, two months ago: but I must inform you, that a few days before I left Edinburgh, having occasion to look into the advocates' library, I there chanced to turn up an old Roman song-book, and, to my great surprise, met with the individual air of *Appie Mac-nab*, which I discovered to be part of an original Patrician cantata on the daughter of the famous Appius, set for the *Tibiæ sinistræ*. In a manuscript marginal note, it is said to have been composed by Tigellius the famous musician, whose death and character Horace takes occasion to entertain and instruct us with, in the second satire of his first Book. You see, therefore, that Lady J——'s taste for Italian music, cannot be called in question; and indeed, I think her liking *Appie Mac-nab*,

is a very strong proof of it, as she certainly could not know its original. The Roman song-book, a very great curiosity, was brought from Rome some hundred years ago, by father Macdonald, an old popish priest, who left it as a legacy to the Duke of Gordon. It is probable, that some musician in the North of Scotland, has transcribed the Appian cantata from it, and giving its principal air a Scottish turn, and adapting proper words to it, has produced the vulgar ballad of *Appie Mac-nab.*

Lady B——'s terror for the Turkey-cock, diverts me extremely. Did they but come to an engagement, how noble must it be! The idea makes a strong impression on my fancy. I shall certainly write something astonishing upon it.

This charming weather has reconciled me to the country. It enlivens me exceedingly. I am cheerful and happy. I have been wandering by myself, all this forenoon, through the sweetest place in the world. The sunshine is mild, the breeze is gentle, my mind is peaceful. I am indulging the most agreeable reveries imaginable. I am thinking of the brilliant scenes of happiness, which I shall enjoy as an officer of the guards. How I shall be acquainted with all the grandeur of a court, and all the elegance of dress and diversions; become a favourite of ministers of state, and the adoration of ladies of quality, beauty, and fortune! How many parties of pleasure shall I have in town! How many fine jaunts to the noble seats of dukes, lords, and members of parliament in the country! I am thinking of the perfect knowledge which I shall acquire of men and manners, of the

intimacies which I shall have the honour to form with the learned and ingenious in every science, and of the many amusing literary anecdotes which I shall pick up. I am thinking of making the tour of Europe, and feasting on the delicious prospects of Italy and France; of feeling all the transports of a bard at Rome, and writing noble poems on the banks of the Tiber. I am thinking of the distinguished honours which I shall receive at every foreign court, and of what infinite service I shall be to all my countrymen upon their travels. I am thinking of returning to England, of getting into the house of commons, of speaking still better than Mr. Pitt, and of being made principal secretary of state. I am thinking of having a regiment of guards, and of making a glorious stand against an invasion by the Spaniards. I am thinking how I shall marry a lady of the highest distinction, with a fortune of a hundred thousand pounds. I am thinking of my flourishing family of children; how my sons shall be men of sense and spirit, and my daughters women of beauty, and every amiable perfection. I am thinking of the prodigious respect which I shall receive, of the splendid books which will be dedicated to me, and the statues which will be erected to my immortal honour.

I am thinking that my mind is too delicate, and my feelings too fine for the rough bustle of life; I am therefore thinking that I shall steal silently and unperceived through the world; that I shall pass the winter in London, much in the same way that the Spectator describes himself to have done; and in summer, shall live sometimes

here at home; sometimes in such a pleasing retirement as Mrs. Row beautifully paints in her letters moral and entertaining. * I like that book much. I read it when I was very young, aud I am persuaded, that it contributed to improve my tender imagination. I am thinking that I shall feel my frame too delicate for the British Climate. I am thinking that I shall go and live in one of the most pleasant provincial towns in the South of France, where I shall be blest with constant felicity. This is a scheme to which I could give vast praise, were I near the beginning of my letter; but as that is very far from being the case, I must reserve it for a future epistle.

I am glad to find you are so anxious to hear about the Cub at Newmarket, Love me, love my Cub. However, I can tell you nothing about him. Dodsley has not yet sent me a copy.

Derrick,* a London author, whom you have heard me mention, has sent me his versifications of the battle of Lora, and some of the Erse fragments. If you want to see them, let me have some franks.

I shall be at Dumfries soon, where I hope to see my friend Johnston. We will talk much of old Scotch history, and the memory of former years will warm our hearts. We will also talk of Captain Andrew, with whom we have

* "Letters, Moral and Entertaining, in Prose and Verse," by Elizabeth Rowe.—ED.

† "Pray, Sir," said Mr. Morgann to Johnson, "whether do you reckon Derrick or Smart the best poet?" Johnson at once felt himself roused; and answered, "Sir, there is no settling the point of precedency between a louse and a flea." Boswell's "Life of Johnson." Date of March 30th, 1783.—ED.

passed many a pleasant hour. Johnston is a very worthy fellow: I may safely say so; for I have lived in intimacy with him more years than the Egyptian famine lasted.

And now, O most renowned of Captains! having fairly written myself out of pen, ink, and paper, I conclude with my usual epithet, of

Your affectionate friend,

JAMES BOSWELL.

LETTER XXIX.

New-Tarbat, May 13, 1762.

Dear BOSWELL,—Your first epistle being of a length which modern letters seldom attain to, surprised me very much; but at the sight of your second, consisting of such an exuberant number of sheets, I was no less amazed than if I had wakened at three o'clock in the morning, and found myself fast clasped in the arms of the empress Queen; or if I had found myself at the mouth of the river Nile, half-eaten by a crocodile; or if I had found myself ascending the fatal ladder in the Grass-market at Edinburgh, and Mr. Alexander Donaldson the hangman. To confess a truth, I imagine your funds for letter-writing are quite inexhaustible; and that the fire of your fancy, like the coal at Newcastle, will never be burnt out; indeed, I look upon you in the light of an old stocking, in which we have no sooner mended one hole, than out starts another; or I think you are like a fertile woman,

who is hardly delivered of one child, before slap she is five months gone with a second. I need not tell you your letters are entertaining; I might as well acquaint King George the Third, that he is sovereign of Great Britain, or gravely disclose to my servant, that his name is William. It is superfluous to inform people of what it is impossible they should not know.

You think you have a knack of story-telling, but there you must yield to me, if you hearken attentively to what I am about to disclose, you will be convinced; it is a tale, my dear Boswell, which whether we consider the turnings and windings of fortune, or the sadness of the catastrophe, is delightful and improving.—You demand of me, Sir, a faithful recital of the events which have distinguished my life. Though the remembrance of every misfortune which can depress human nature, must be painful; yet the commands of such a revered friend as James Boswell must be obeyed; and Oh, Sir! if you find any of my actions blamable, impute them to destiny, and if you find any of them commendable, impute them to my good sense. I am about fifty years of age, grief makes me look as if I was fourscore; thirty years ago I was a great deal younger; and about twenty years before that, I was just born; as I find nothing remarkable in my life, before that event, I shall date my history from that period; some omens happened at my birth: Mr. Oman at Leith was married at that time; this was thought very portentous; the very day my mother was brought to bed of me, the cat was delivered of three kittens; but the world was soon bereaved of them by death, and I had

not the pleasure of passing my infancy with such amiable companions; this was my first misfortune, and no subsequent one ever touched me more nearly; delightful innocents! methinks, I still see them playing with their tails, and galloping after corks; with what a becoming gravity did they wash their faces! how melodious was their purring! From them I derived any little taste I have for music; I composed an Ode upon their death; as it was my first attempt in poetry, I write it for your perusal; you will perceive the marks of genius in the first production of MY TENDER IMAGINATION; and you will shed a tear of applause and sorrow, on the remains of those animals, so dear to the premature years of your mourning and lamenting friend.

ODE

ON THE DEATH OF THREE KITTENS.

STROPHE.

Attend, ye watchful cats,
 Attend the ever lamentable strain;
For cruel death, most kind to rats,
 Has kill'd the sweetest of the kitten-train.

ANTISTROPHE.

How pleas'd did I survey,
Your beauteous whiskers as they daily grew,
 I mark'd your eyes that beam'd so grey,
But little thought that nine lives were too few.

EPODE.

It was delight to see
My lovely kittens three,
When after corks through all the room they flew,
When oft in gamesome guise they did their tails pursue.
When thro' the house,
You hardly, hardly, heard a mouse;
And every rat lay snug and still,
And quiet as a thief in mill;
But cursed death has with a blow,
Laid all my hopes low, low, low, low:
Had that foul fiend the least compassion known;
I should not now lament my beauteous kittens gone.

You have often wondered what made me such a miserable spectacle; grief for the death of my kittens, has wrought the most wonderful effects upon me; grief has drawn my teeth, pulled out my hair, hollowed my eyes, bent my back, crooked my legs, and marked my face with the small-pox; but I give over this subject, seeing it will have too great a hold of your tender imagination: I find myself too much agitated with melancholy to proceed any longer in my life to-day; the weather also is extremely bad, and a thousand mournful ideas rush into my mind; I am totally overpowered with them; I will now disburden myself to you, and set down each sad thought as it occurs.

I am thinking how I will never get a clean shirt to my back; how my coat will always be out at the elbows; and how I never will get my breeches to stay up. I am

thinking how I will be married to a shrew of a wife, who will beat me every evening and morning, and sometimes in the middle of the day. I am thinking what a d——d w—— she will be, and how my children will be most of them hanged, and whipped through towns, and burnt in the hand. I am thinking of what execrable poems I will write; and how I will be thrown into prison for debt; and how I will never get out again; and how nobody will pity me. I am thinking how hungry I will be; and how little I will get to eat; and how I'll long for a piece of roast-beef; and how they'll bring me a rotten turnip. And I am thinking how I will take a consumption, and waste away inch by inch; and how I'll grow very fat and unwieldy, and won't be able to stir out of my chair. And I am thinking how I'll be roasted by the Portuguese inquisition; and how I'll be impaled by the Turks; and how I'll be eaten by Cannibals; and how I'll be drowned on a voyage to the East Indies; and how I'll be robbed and murdered by a highwayman; and how I'll lose my senses; and how very mad I'll be; and how my body will be thrown out to dogs to devour; and how I'll be hanged, drawn, and quartered; and how my friend Boswell will neglect me; and how I'll be despised by the whole world; and how I will meet with ten thousand misfortunes worse than the loss of my kittens.

Thus have I, in a brief manner, related a few of the calamities which, in the present disposition of my mind, appear so dreadful; I could have enlarged the catalogue, but your heart is too susceptible of pity, and I will not shock you altogether. You will doubtless remark the

great inequality of our fortunes. In your last letter, you was the happiest man I was ever acquainted with; I wish it may last, and that your children may have as much merit as you imagine; I only hope you won't plan a marriage with any of mine, their dispositions will be so unlike, that it must prove unhappy.

Pray send me Derrick's versifications, which though they are undoubtedly very bad, I shall be glad to see, as sometimes people take a pleasure in beholding a man hanged. And now, Boswell, I am going to end my letter, which being very short, I know will please you, as you will think you have gained a complete victory over the captain, seeing that you are several sheets a-head of me; but times may alter, and when I resume my adventures, you will find yourself sorely defeated; believe me,

Yours sincerely,

ANDREW ERSKINE.

LETTER XXX.

New-Tarbat, May 25, 1762.

Dear BOSWELL,—It has been said, that few people succeed both in poetry and prose. Homer's prose essay on the gun-powder-plot, is reckoned by all critics inferior to the Iliad; and Warburton's rhyming satire on the methodists is allowed by all to be superior to his prosaical notes on Pope's works. Let it be mine to unite the excellencies both of prose and verse in my inimitable

epistles. From this day, my prose shall have a smack of verse, and my verse have a smack of prose. I'll give you a specimen of both—My servant addresses me in these words, very often—

> The roll is butter'd, and the kettle boil'd,
> Your honour's newest coat with grease is soil'd;
> In your best breeches glares a mighty hole,
> Your wash-ball and pomatum, Sir, are stole.
> Your tailor, Sir, must payment have, that's plain,
> He call'd to-day, and said he'd call again.

There's prosaic poetry; now for poetic prose—Universal genius is a wide and diffused stream that waters the country and makes it agreeable; 'tis true, it cannot receive ships of any burden, therefore it is of no solid advantage, yet is it very amusing. Gondolas and painted barges float upon its surface, the country gentleman forms it into ponds, and it is spouted out of the mouths of various statues; it strays through the finest fields, and its banks nourish the most blooming flowers. Let me sport with this stream of science, wind along the vale, and glide through the trees, foam down the mountain, and sparkle in the sunny ray; but let me avoid the deep, nor lose myself in the vast profound, and grant that I may never be pent in the bottom of a dreary cave, or be so unfortunate as to stagnate in some unwholesome marsh. Limited genius is a pump-well, very useful in all the common occurrences of life, the water drawn from it is of service to the maids in washing their aprons; it boils beef, and it

scours the stairs; it is poured into the tea-kettles of the ladies, and into the punch-bowls of the gentlemen.

Having thus given you, in the most clear and distinct manner, my sentiments of genius, I proceed to give you my opinion of the ancient and modern writers; a subject, you must confess, very aptly and naturally introduced. I am going to be very serious, you will trace a resemblance between me and Sir William Temple,* or perhaps David Hume, Esq.

A modern writer must content himself with gleaning a few thoughts here and there, and binding them together without order or regularity, that the variety may please; the ancients have reaped the full of the harvest, and killed the noblest of the game: in vain do we beat about the once plenteous fields, the dews are exhaled, no scent remains. How glorious was the fate of the early writers!† born in the infancy of letters; their task was to reject thoughts more than to seek after them, and to select out of a number, the most shining, the most striking, and the most susceptible of ornament. The poet saw in his walks every pleasing object of nature undescribed; his heart danced with the gale, and his spirits shone with the invigorating sun, his works breathed nothing but rapture

* Temple wrote "An Essay upon Ancient and Modern Learning."—ED.

† The most ancient poets are considered as the best * * * * whether the first writers took possession of the most striking objects for description, and the most probable occurrences for fiction, and left nothing to those that followed them but transcription of the same events, and new combinations of the same images.—"Rasselas," chapter x.—ED.

and enthusiasm. Love then spoke with its genuine voice, the breast was melted down with woe, the whole soul was dissolved into pity with its tender complaints; free from the conceits and quibbles which, since that time, have rendered the very name of it ridiculous; real passion heaved the sigh; real passion uttered the most prevailing language. Music too reigned in its full force; that soft deluding art, whose pathetic strains so gently steal into our very souls, and involve us in the sweetest confusion; or whose animating strains fire us even to madness: how has the shore of Greece echoed with the wildest sounds; the delicious warblings of the Lyre charmed and astonished every ear. The blaze of rhetoric then burst forth; the ancients sought not by false thoughts, and glittering diction, to captivate the ear, but by manly and energetic modes of expression, to rule the heart and sway the passions.

There, Boswell, there are periods for you. Did you not imagine that you was reading "The Rambler" of Mr. Samuel Johnson; or that Mr. Thomas Sheridan* himself was resounding the praises of the ancients, and his own art? I shall now finish this letter without the least blaze of rhetoric, and with no very manly or energetic mode of expression, assure you, that I am,

Yours sincerely,

ANDREW ERSKINE.

* Thomas Sheridan, the father of R. B. Sheridan, was about this time lecturing on Oratory. "He knows that I laugh at his oratory," Johnson once said to Boswell.—ED.

LETTER XXXI.

Auchinleck, June 1, 1762.

At length, O Erskine! Lady B—— and the Turkey-cock are sung in strains sublime. I have finished an ode. Receive it with reverence.* It is one of the greatest productions of the human mind. Just that sort of composition which we form an awful and ravishing conception of, in those divine moments, when the soul (to use a bold metaphor) is in full blow, and soaring fancy reaches its utmost heights. Could it but be really personified—it would be like Saul of old, taller than any of the people, and were it to be guilty of a capital crime, it could not enjoy one of the greatest privileges of a British subject, to be tried by its Peers.

I am sure that my ode is great. Mr. James Bruce the gardener, my faithful counsellor and very excellent companion, declares it is quite to his mind. He stood by me while I took my portrait of the cock, from a large one which struts upon the green. I shall be in Edinburgh in a few days; for which reason, I remain your affectionate friend,

JAMES BOSWELL.

* The Ode is not worth reprinting.—ED.

LETTER XXXII.

New-Tarbat, June 5, 1762.

Dear BOSWELL,—The first idea of our correspondence was not yours; for, many months before you addressed me, I wrote you the following letter at Fort George, where you may remember our acquaintance commenced. You'll observe that some of the stanzas * are parodies on Gray's Elegy in a Church-yard, I use the liberty to mark them. I stood too much in awe of you, to send it when it was written, and I am too much at my ease now, to be withheld any longer from presenting you with it.

I am, Sir,
With the greatest respect and esteem,
Your most obedient,
And most humble servant,
ANDREW ERSKINE.

LETTER XXXIII.

Auchinleck, June 9, 1762.

Dear ERSKINE,—At this delightful season of the year, when everything is cheerful and gay, when the groves are all rich with leaves, the gardens with flowers, and the

* These stanzas are nearly as bad as Boswell's Ode, and, like it, are not worth reprinting.—ED.

orchards with blossoms, one would think it almost impossible to be unhappy; yet such is my hard fate at present, that instead of relishing the beautiful appearance of nature, instead of participating the universal joy, I rather look upon it with aversion, as it exhibits a strong contrast to the cloudy darkness of my mind, and so gives me a more dismal view of my own situation. Fancy, capricious fancy will allow me to see nothing but shade. How strange is it to think, that I who lately abounded in bliss, should now be the slave of black melancholy! How unaccountable does it appear to the reasoning mind that this change should be produced without any visible cause. However, since I have been seized with *the pale cast of thought*, I know not how, I comfort myself, that I shall get free of it as whimsically. You must excuse this piece of serious sententiousness; for it has relieved me; and you may look upon it as much the same with coughing before one begins to sing, or deliver anything in public, in order that the voice may be as clear as possible.

The death of your kittens, my dear Erskine! affected me very much. I could wish that you would form it into a tragedy, as the story is extremely pathetic, and could not fail greatly to interest the tender passions. If you have any doubts as to the propriety of their being three in number, I beg it of you to reflect that the immortal Shakespeare has introduced three daughters into his tragedy of King Lear, which has often drawn tears from the eyes of multitudes. The same author has likewise begun his tragedy of Macbeth with three witches; and Mr. Alexander Donaldson has resolved, that his collection

of original poems by Scotch gentlemen, shall consist of three volumes, and no more.

I don't know, indeed, but your affecting tale might better suit the intention of an opera, especially when we consider the musical genius of the feline race: were a sufficient number of these animals put under the tuition of proper masters, nobody can tell what an astonishing chorus might be produced. If this proposal shall be embraced, I make no doubt of its being the wonder of all Europe, and I remain,

Yours, as usual,

JAMES BOSWELL.

LETTER XXXIV.

New-Tarbat, June 14, 1762.

AND are YOU gloomy! oh James Boswell! has your flow of spirits evaporated, and left nothing but the black dregs of melancholy behind? has the smile of cheerfulness left your countenance? and is the laugh of gaiety no more? oh woeful condition! oh wretched friend! but in this situation you are dear to me; for lately my disposition was exactly similar to yours. No conversation pleased me; no books could fix my attention; I could write no letters, and I despised my own poems. Tell me how you was affected; could you speak any? could you fix your thoughts upon anything but the dreary way you was in? and would not the sight of me have made you very miserable? I have lately had the epidemical dis-

temper; I don't mean poverty, but that cold which they call the influenza, and which made its first appearance in London;* whether it came to Scotland in the wagon, or travelled with a companion in a post-chaise, is quite uncertain.

Derrick's versifications are infamously bad; what think you of the Reviewers commending such an execrable performance? I have a fancy to write an ironical criticism upon it, and praise all the worst lines, which you shall send to Derrick, as the real sentiments of a gentleman of your acquaintance on reading his work. For want of something else to entertain you, I begin my criticism immediately.—To versify poetical prose has been found a very difficult task. Dr. Young and Mr. Langhorne, in their paraphrases upon the Bible (which Lord Bolingbroke tells us, is an excellent book) have succeeded but indifferently: I therefore took up Mr. Samuel Derrick's versifications from Fingal, with little expectation of being entertained; but let no man judge of a book till at least he reads the title page; for lo! Mr. Samuel Derrick has adorned his with a very apt and uncommon quotation, from a good old poet called Virgil. I am much pleased with the candour so conspicuous in the short advertisement to the public, in which Mr. Derrick seems very willing to run snacks in reputation with Mr. MacPherson, which will greatly rejoice that gentleman, who cannot justly boast of so extensive a fame as Mr. Samuel Der-

* The time is wonderfully sickly; nothing but sore-throats, colds, and fevers." Horace Walpole, in a letter to George Montagu, April 29, 1762.—ED.

rick. The dedication is very elegant, though, I am apt to think, the author has neither praised Lord Pomfret nor himself enough; two worthy people, who, in my opinion, deserve it. But at last, we come to the poems themselves: and here I might indulge myself in warm and indiscriminate applause; but let it be my ambition to trace Mr. Derrick step by step through his wonderful work; let me pry both into the kitchen and dining-room of his genius, to use the comparison of the great Mr. Boyle. The first lines, or the exordium of the battle of Lora, are calmly sublime, and refined with simplicity. In the eighth line, our author gives the epithet of posting to the wind, which is very beautiful: however, to make it natural, it ought to be applied, in poetical justice, to that wind which wafts a packet-boat. I had almost forgot, the sixth line says, "the voice of songs, a tuneful voice I hear." Now, I should be glad to know, whether these same songs be a man or a woman. Lines 23 and 24.

"In secret round they glanc'd their kindled eyes,
Their indignation spoke in bursting sighs."

It seems to me improbable, that a pair of kindled eyes could glance in secret; and I cannot think that sighs are the language of indignation. Lines 57, 58, 59.

"So on the settled sea blue mists arise,
In vapory volumes darkening to the skies,
They glitter in the sun."

These mists that glitter and are dark at the same time,

are very extraordinary, and the contrast is lovely and new. Line 67th begins—"His post is terror."—This is a post, that, I believe, none of our members of Parliament would accept. Lines 175, 176,

> "An hundred steeds he gives that own the rein,
> Never a swifter race devour'd the plain."

Devoured the plain! if this is not sublime, then am I no critic; however, its lucky for the landed interest, that the breed of those horses is lost; they might do very well, I confess, in the Highlands of Scotland; but a dozen of them turned loose near Salisbury would be inconceivably hurtful. I'm tired of this stuff; if you think it worth the while you may end it and send it to Derrick; but let your part be better than mine, or it won't do. "Grief for thy loss drank all my vitals dry"——I laughed heartily at that line.

In this letter I have bestowed my dulness * freely upon you; you have had my wit, and you must take my stupidity into the bargain; as when we go to the market, we purchase bones as well as beef; and when we marry an heiress, we are obliged to take the woman as well as the money; and when we buy Donaldson's collection, we pay as dear for the poems of Mr. Lauchlan MacPherson, as we do for those written by the incomparable Captain Andrew.

* "If I were as tedious as a king, I could find it in my heart to bestow it all of your worship."—"Much Ado about Nothing." Act iii., scene 5.—ED.

You are in Edinburgh, I imagine, by this time, if the information of Mr. Alexander Donaldson may be depended upon. I shall be in town one night soon on my way to Kelly, for the H——s of D—— threaten an invasion upon this peaceful abode. Farewell.

Yours sincerely,

ANDREW ERSKINE.

LETTER XXXV.

Edinburgh, June 19, 1762.

Dear ERSKINE,—You have upon many occasions made rather too free with my person, upon which I have often told you that I principally value myself. I feel a strong inclination to retaliate. I have great opportunity, and I will not resist it. Your figure, Erskine, is amazingly uncouth. The length of your body bears no manner of proportion to its breadth, and far less does its breadth bear to its length. If we consider you one way, you are the tallest, and if we consider you another way, you are the thickest man alive. The crookedness of your back is terrible; but it is nothing in comparison of the frightful distortions of your countenance. What monsters have you been the cause of bringing into the world! not only the wives of sergeants and corporals of the 71st regiment, but the unhappy women in every town where you was quartered, by looking at you have conceived in horror. Natural defects should be spared; but I must not omit the large holes in your ears, and the deep marks of the iron on your hands. I hope you will allow these to be

artificial. Nature nails no man's ears to the pillory. Nature burns no man in the hand. As I have a very sincere friendship for you, I cannot help giving you my best advice with regard to your future schemes of life. I would beseech you to lay aside all your chimerical projects, which have made you so absurd. You know very well, when you went upon the stage at Kingston in Jamaica, how shamefully you exposed yourself, and what disgrace and vexation you brought upon all your friends. You must remember what sort of treatment you met with, when you went and offered yourself to be one of the fathers of the inquisition at Macerata, in the room of Mr. Archibald Bower;* a project which could enter into the head of no man who was not utterly destitute of common sense.

You tell me, that your intention at present is, to take orders in the Church of England; and you hope I will approve of your plan: but I must tell you honestly, that this is a most ridiculous hair-brained conceit. Before you can be qualified for the smallest living, you must study nine years at Oxford; you must eat at a moderate computation, threescore of fat beeves, and upwards of two hundred sheep; you must consume a thousand stone of bread, and swallow ninety hogsheads of porter. You flatter yourself with being highly promoted, because you are an Earl's brother, and a man of genius. But, my dear friend, I beg it of you to consider, how little these

*The author of the "History of the Popes." He had been a professor in the University of Macerata, and a Counsellor of the Inquisition. He became a Protestant, and died in England.—ED.

advantages have already availed you. The army was as good a scene for you to rise in as the church can be; and yet you are only a lieutenant in a very young regiment.

I seriously think, that your most rational scheme should be, to turn inn-keeper upon some of the great roads: you might have an elegant sign painted of Apollo and the Muses, and entertainment for men and horses, by THE HONOURABLE ANDREW ERSKINE, would be something very unusual, and could not fail to bring numbers of people to your house. You would by this means have a life of most pleasing indolence, and would never want a variety of company, as you would constantly dine and sup with your guests. Men of fashion would be glad to receive you as their equal; and men of no fashion would be proud to sit at table with one who had any pretension to nobility. I hope the honest concern which I shew for your real welfare, will convince you how much I am,

My dear Sir,
Your most affectionate friend,
JAMES BOSWELL.

LETTER XXXVI.

Kelly, July 5, 1762.

Dear BOSWELL,—Vanity has, in all former ages, been reckoned the characteristic of poets; in our time, I think they are more particularly distinguished by modesty; I have carefully perused their works, and I have never once

found them throwing out either thought, sentiment, or reflection of their own; convincing proof of their humility; they seem all to allow that the ancients, and some few of the earlier moderns, were much better writers than themselves; therefore they beg, borrow, and steal from them, without the smallest mercy or hesitation. In some things, however, they are quite original; their margins and prices are larger than any ever known before; and they advertise their pieces much oftener in the newspapers than any of their predecessors. You compliment me highly on my elegies, and tell me that I have even dared to be original now and then; and you ask me very seriously, how I come to be so well acquainted with the tender passion of love.—Ah, Sir, how deceitful are appearances! under a forbidding aspect and uncouth form, I conceal the soul of an Oroondates, a soul that thrills with the most sensible emotions at the sight of beauty. Love easily finds access where the mind is naturally inclined to melancholy; we foster the pleasing delusion, it grows up with our frame, and becomes a part of our being; long have I laboured under the influence of that passion; long vented my grief in unavailing sighs. Besides, your thin meagre man is always the most violent lover; a thousand delusions enter his paper-skull, which the man of guts never dreams of. In vain does Cupid shoot his arrows at the plump existence, who is entrenched in a solid wall of fat: they are buried like shrimps in melted butter; as eggs are preserved by mutton-tallow, from rottenness and putrefaction, so he, by his grease, is preserved from love. Pleased with his pipe, he sits and

smokes in his elbow-chair; totally unknown to him is the ardent passion that actuates the sentimental soul: alas! unhappy man! he never indulged in the pleasing reverie which inspires the spindle-shanked lover, as he strays through nodding forest by gliding stream; if he marries, he chooses a companion fat as himself; they lie together, and most musical is their snore, they melt like two pounds of butter in one plate in a sunshiny-day.

Pray, Boswell, remember me kindly to honest Johnston. Let me know if his trees are growing well, at his paternal estate of Grange; if he is as fond of Melvil's Memoirs* as he used to be; and if he continues to stretch himself in the sun upon the mountains near Edinburgh.

I ever am,

Yours most affectionately,

ANDREW ERSKINE.

LETTER XXXVII.

Kelly, July 6, 1762.

Dear BOSWELL,—Nothing happened during my journey; I arrived in Aberdeen on Thursday last; the town is really neater, cleaner, and better than you would imagine; but the country around is dismal; long gloomy moors, and the extended ocean, are the only prospects that present themselves; the whole region seems as if made in direct opposition to descriptive poetry. You meet here with none of the lengthened meads, sunny vales

* Sir James Melville. Born 1535, died 1607. His "Memoirs" were published in 1683.—ED.

and dashing streams, that brighten in the raptured poet's eye; however, as I believe you have been here, I shall trouble you with no farther descriptions.

Never was parting more tender than that of mine with George Robertson the postilion, and the Kelly chaise at Dundee water-side; we formed as dolorous a trio as then existed upon the face of this valley of tears. Oh George! Oh! Erskine! were the cries that echoed across the waves, and along the mountains.

Tears trickled down the rugged boatman's face,
An unpaid freight he thought no harder case;
The seals no longer sported in the sea,
While ev'ry bell rung mournful in Dundee,
Huge ploughmen wept, and stranger still, 'tis said,
So strong is sympathy, that asses bray'd.

Farewell, lovely George, I roared out, and oh! if you should happen to be dry, for such is the nature of sorrow, take this shilling, and spend it in the sugared ale, or the wind-expelling dram: with sweet reluctance he put forth his milk-white hand, cold with clammy sweat, and with a faltering voice, feebly thanked me. Oh! I shall never forget my emotions when he drove from me, and the chaise lessened in my view; now it whirled sublime along the mountain's edge; now, I scarcely saw the head of George nodding in the vale. Thus, on the summit of a craggy cliff, which high overlooks the resounding waves, Jean, Susan, or Nell, sees in a boat her lovely sailor, who has been torn from her arms by a cruel press-gang; now

it climbs the highest seas; now it is buried between two billows, and vanishes from her sight. Weep not, sweet maid, he shall return loaded with honours; a gold watch shall grace each fob, a pair of silver buckles shall shine resplendent upon his shoes, and a silk handkerchief shall be tied around his neck, which soon shall cover thy snowy bosom.

When the chaise was totally lost, and my breast was distracted with a thousand different passions; all of a sudden I broke out into the following soliloquy.—Surely, surely mortal man is a chaise: now trailing through the heavy sand of indolence, anon jolted to death upon the rough road of discontent; and shortly after sunk in the deep rut of low spirits; now galloping on the post-road of expectation, and immediately after, trotting on the stony one of disappointment; but the days of our driving soon cease, our shafts break, our leather rots, and we tumble into a hole.

Adieu, yours,

ANDREW ERSKINE.

LETTER XXXVIII.

Kelly, July 7, 1762.

Dear BOSWELL,—I imagined, that by ceasing to write to you for some time, I should be able to lay up a stock of materials, enough to astonish you, and that, like a river damm'd up, when let loose, I should flow on with unusual rapidity; or like a man, who has not beat his wife for a

fortnight, I should cudgel you with my wit for hours together; but I find the contrary of all this is the case; I resemble a person long absent from his native country, of which he has formed a thousand endearing ideas, and to which he at last returns; but alas! he beholds with sorrowful eyes, everything changed for the worse; the town where he was born, which used to have two snows * and three sloops trading to all parts of the known world, is not now master of two fishing-boats; the steeple of the church, where he used to sleep in his youth, is rent with lightning; and the girl on whom he had placed his early affections, has had three bastard children, and is just going to be delivered of a fourth; or I resemble a man who has had a fine waistcoat lying long in the very bottom of a chest, which he is determined shall be put on at the hunter's ball; but woe's me, the lace is tarnished, and the moths have devoured it in a melancholy manner; these few similies may serve to shew, that this letter has little chance of being a good one; yet they don't make the affair certain. Prince Ferdinand beat the French at Minden; Sheridan, in his lectures, sometimes spoke sense; and John Home wrote one good play. † I have

* A snow (Low-German, snau; High-German, schnau) is a small vessel with beaked or snout-like bows, according to Wedgewood. But more probably it takes its name from the triangular shape of its sails.—Schnauzegel, a trysail.—ED.

† "As we sat over our tea, Mr. Home's tragedy of Douglas was mentioned. I put Dr. Johnson in mind that once, in a coffee-house at Oxford, he called to old Mr. Sheridan, 'how came you, Sir, to give Home a gold medal for writing that foolish play?'" Boswell's "Tour to the Hebrides." Date of October 26, 1773.—ED.

read Lord Kames's Elements, * and agree very heartily with the opinion of the Critical Reviewers; however, I could often have wished, that his Lordship had been less obscure, or that I had had more penetration; he praises the Mourning Bride excessively, which, nevertheless, I can not help thinking a very indifferent play; the plot wild and improbable, and the language infinitely too high and swelling.† It is curious to see the opinions of the Reviewers concerning you and me; they take you for a poor distressed gentleman, writing for bread, and me for a very impudent Irishman; whereas you are heir to a thousand a year, and I am one of the most bashful Scotchmen that ever appeared! I confess, indeed, my bashfulness does not appear in my works, for them I print in the most impudent manner; being exceeded in that respect by nobody but James Boswell, Esq.

Yours, &c., ANDREW ERSKINE.

LETTER XXXIX.

Kames, October 19, 1762.

Dear ERSKINE,—In my own name, and in the name of Lord Kames, I desire to see you here immediately. I

* "The Elements of Criticism," by Henry Home, Lord Kames, "Sir," said Johnson, "this book is a pretty essay and deserves to be held in some estimation though much of it is chimerical!" Boswell's "Life of Johnson." Date of May 16, 1763.—ED.

† "In this play there is more bustle than sentiment; the plot is busy and intricate, and the events take hold on the attention; but, except a very few passages, we are rather amused with noise, and perplexed with stratagem, than entertained with any true delineation of natural characters."—Johnson's "Lives of the Poets."—ED.

have been reading the "Elements of Criticism." You and the Reviewers have pronounced enough of serious panegyric on that book. In my opinion, it has the good properties of all the four elements. It has the solidity of earth, the pureness of air, the glow of fire, and the clearness of water. The language is excellent, and sometimes rises to so noble a pitch, that I exclaim, in imitation of Zanga in the Revenge, *

"I like this roaring of the Elements."

If this does not bring you, nothing will; and so, Sir, I continue,

Yours as usual,

JAMES BOSWELL.

LETTER XL.

Kelly, October 28, 1762.

Dear BOSWELL,—How shall I begin? what species of apology shall I make? the truth is, I really could not write, my spirits have been depressed so unaccountably. I have had whole mountains of lead pressing me down: you would have thought that five Dutchmen had been riding on my back, ever since I saw you; or that I had been covered with ten thousand folios of controversial divinity; you would have imagined that I was crammed in the most dense part of a plumb-pudding, or steeped in a hogshead of thick English Port. Heavens! is it possible,

* "The Revenge," a tragedy, by Edward Young, author of "Night Thoughts."—ED.

that a man of some fame for joking, possessed of
unlaughable talent in punning, and endued with no cc
temptible degree of liveliness in letter-writing, should
of a sudden have become more impenetrably stupid th
a Hottentot legislator, or a moderator of the gene
assembly of the Kirk of Scotland. By that smile whi
enlivens your black countenance, like a farthing can
in a dark cellar, I perceive I am pardoned; indeed
expected no less; for, I believe, if a sword was to
you through the body, or a rope was to hang you,
would forget and forgive: you are at Kames just n
very happy, I suppose; your letter seems to come fron
man in excellent spirits; I am very unequal at present
the task of writing an answer to it, but I was resolved
delay no longer, lest you should think I neglected you
fully; a thought, I'm sure, you never shall have occasion
entertain of me, though the mist of dulness should for e
obscure and envelope my fancy and imagination. I c
not think of coming to Kames, yet I am sufficien
thankful for the invitation; my lowness would hav
very bad effect in a cheerful society; it would be lik
dead march in the midst of a hornpipe, or a mourn
elegy in a collection of epigrams.

Farewell. Yours, &c.,

ANDREW ERSKINE

LETTER XLI.

Parliament-Close, Nov. 10, 1762.

Dear ERSKINE,—All I have now to say, is to inform you, that I shall set out for London on Monday next, and to beg that you may not leave Edinburgh before that time.

My letters have often been carried to you over rising mountains and rolling seas. This pursues a simpler track, and under the tuition of a cadie,* is transmitted from the Parliament-Close to the Canongate. Thus it is with human affairs; all is fluctuating, all is changing. Believe me,

Yours, &c.

JAMES BOSWELL.

LETTER XLII.

London, Nov. 20, 1762.

Dear ERSKINE,—What sort of a letter shall I now write to you? Shall I cram it from top to bottom with tables of compound interest? with anecdotes of Queen

* "There is at Edinburgh a society or corporation of errand-boys, called 'cawdies,' who ply in the streets at night with paper lanthorns, and are very serviceable in carrying messages."—"Humphry Clinker," vol. ii., p. 240.—ED.

Anne's wars? with excerpts from Robertson's history? or with long stories translated from Olaus Wormius?*

To pass four-and-twenty hours agreeably was still my favourite plan. I think at present that the mere contemplation of this amazing bustle of existence, is enough to make my four-and-twenty go merrily round. I went last night to Covent-Garden; and saw Woodward play Captain Bobadil;† he is a very lively performer; but a little extravagant: I was too late for getting into Drury-Lane, where Garrick played King Lear. That inimitable actor is in as full glory as ever; like genuine wine, he improves by age, and possesses the steady and continued admiration even of the inconstant English.‡

I don't know what to say to you about myself: if I can get into the Guards, it will please me much; if not, I can't help it. Perhaps you may hear of my turning Templar, and perhaps ranger of some of his Majesty's parks. It is not impossible but I may catch a little true poetic inspiration, and have my works splendidly printed at Straw-

* A distinguished Danish historian and antiquary, "Known in the history of anatomy by the bones of the skull named after him *ossa Wormiana*."—ED.

† In Ben Jonson's "Every Man in his Humour." This was thought to be Woodward's masterpiece.—ED.

‡ This is scarcely correct. Garrick's popularity was, at this time, falling off, and his theatre did not fill. "The profits of the following season," says Davies, "fell very short to those of the preceding years." At the close of the season he went abroad, and was away for nearly two years. In Rogers's "Table Talk," it is recorded—"Before his going abroad, Garrick's attraction had much decreased; Sir W. W. Pepys said that the pit was often almost empty. But, on his return to England, people were mad about seeing him." His popularity did not wane a second time.—ED.

berry-hill, under the benign influence of the Honourable Horace Walpole.* You and I, Erskine, are, to be sure, somewhat vain. We have some reason too. The Reviewers gave great applause to your Odes to Indolence and Impudence; and they called my poems "agreeable light pieces," which was the very character I wished for. Had they said less, I should not have been satisfied; and had they said more, I should have thought it a burlesque.

What a fine animated prospect of life now spreads before me! Be assured, that my genius will be highly improved, and please yourself with the hopes of receiving letters still more entertaining. I ever am,

Your affectionate friend,

JAMES BOSWELL.

* Walpole always expressed the greatest contempt for Boswell. In one of his letters he says that "he is the ape of most of Johnson's faults, without a grain of his sense." In another letter he writes about "a jackanapes who has lately made a noise here, one Boswell, by anecdotes of Dr. Johnson." Improbable though it was that Boswell should catch a little true poetic inspiration, it was still more improbable that he should ever have a single one of his works printed at The Strawberry Press.—ED.



THE JOURNAL

OF

A TOUR

TO

CORSICA.



INTRODUCTION.

THE following sketch of the Corsican War of Independence may, perhaps, enable the reader better to follow Boswell in his narrative, and in his description of Paoli's character. I have founded it chiefly on Boswell's own account, though I have, at the same time consulted other authorities. As an historical writer, in theory at least, he would scarcely satisfy the exact school of historians that has sprung up since his day. "I confess I am not," he says in his second chapter, "for humouring an inordinate avidity for positive evidence." He is speaking, however, about the origin of nations, and not about the wars of Corsica, which he describes at some length.

From about the beginning of the fourteenth century Corsica had belonged to the Republic of Genoa. The islanders had proved restive under the yoke of their hard masters, and more than once had risen in revolt. The Government of the Republic was, indeed, the worst of despotisms. A succession of

infamous Governors—men who came to Corsica poor, and, after their two years of office, returned to Genoa rich—had cruelly oppressed the people. By their ill-gotten wealth, and by their interest in the Senate, they were able on their return to secure themselves against any inquiry into their conduct. The foreign trade of the islanders was almost ruined by a law which appointed Genoa as the sole port to which their products could be exported. The Corsicans, like many other mountaineers, had always been too much given up to private feuds. But it was charged against their Genoese masters, that, in their dread of union among their subjects, they themselves fomented dissentions. It was asserted in a petition presented to the King of France in 1738, that, under the last sixteen Governors, no less than 26,000 Corsicans had died by the hands of the assassin.

In the legal proceedings that followed on these deeds of bloodshed, the Genoese judges found their profit. Condemnation was often followed by confiscation of the criminal's estates; acquittal had often been preceded by a heavy bribe to the judge. Multitudes were condemned to the galleys on frivolous charges in the hope that they would purchase their freedom at a high price. The law was even worse than the judges. A man could be condemned to the galleys or to death on secret infor-

mation, without being once confronted with his accusers, without undergoing any examination, without the observance of any formality of any kind in the sentence that was passed on him. The judge could either acquit the greatest criminal, or condemn a man of stainless character "*ex informata conscientia*, on the information of his own conscience, of which he was not obliged to give any account." He could at any time stop the course of justice, "by saying '*Non procedatur*, let there be no process;' which could easily be cloaked under the pretence of some defect in point of form." When this atrocious law was at last abolished, Montesquieu wrote, "On a vu souvent des peuples demander des priviléges; ici le souverain accorde le droit de toutes les nations." No wonder that Horace Walpole exclaimed more than twenty years before Boswell's book was published, "I hate the Genoese; they make a commonwealth the most devilish of all tyrannies!"

In 1729 the people rose once more against their rulers. It was the case of Wat Tyler over again. A tax-gatherer demanded a small sum—it was but about fivepence—of a poor old woman. Small as it was, she had not wherewithal to pay. He abused her, and seized some of her furniture. She raised an outcry. Her neighbours came flocking in and took her part. The tax-gatherer used threats, and was answered with a volley of stones.

Troops were sent to support him in the execution of his office, and the people, in their turn, flew to their weapons. The revolt spread, and soon the whole island was in arms. The Genoese, as vassals of the Empire, sought the aid of their sovereign lord, the Emperor Charles the Sixth, who sent a strong body of troops to the island. The Corsicans were unable to resist, and "laid down their arms, upon condition that a treaty should be made between them and the Genoese, having for guarantee the Emperor." Hostages were sent by the islanders, to whom the Republic was inclined to show but scant respect. In fact, the Emperor's consent to their execution had been almost obtained, when the Prince of Wirtemberg, the commander of the imperial forces in Corsica, sent an express to Vienna, "with a very strong letter, representing how much the honour of Cæsar would suffer, should he consent to the death of those who had surrendered themselves upon the faith of his sacred protection." The great Prince Eugene also spoke out, and for this time, Cæsar's honour—at all events, all that was left of it—was saved.

The suspension of hostilities was but short; for neither was the cruelty of the Genoese, nor the hatred of the Corsicans easily confined within the limits of a treaty. "There is not," writes Boswell, "a Corsican child who can procure a little gunpowder, but he immediately sets fire to it, huzzas

at the explosion, and, as if he had blown up the enemy, calls out, 'Ecco i Genovesi; there go the Genoese!'" In 1734, the whole island once more was in the flames of an insurrection. Giafferi and Giacinto Paoli, the father of the famous Pascal Paoli, were chosen as leaders. The Genoese hired Swiss mercenaries. They thought that against soldiers, brought up amidst the Alps, as these had been, the mountains of Corsica would provide no shelter for freedom. But the Swiss "soon saw that they had made a bad bargain, and that they gave the Genoese too much blood for their money." When at Lucerne we gaze at the noble monument set up by Switzerland in memory of her sons who were massacred in Paris, it is well at times to remember how the Swiss lion was at the hire of the very jackals of the world.

Genoa next published an indemnity to all her assassins and outlaws, on condition that they should fight for the Republic, in Corsica. "The robbers and assassins of Genoa," writes Boswell, "are no inconsiderable proportion of her people. These wretches flocked together from all quarters, and were formed into twelve companies." The Corsican chiefs called a general assembly, in which "On donna la Corse à la Vierge Marie, qui ne parut pas accepter cette couronne."* They were not,

* Voltaire, "Précis du Siècle de Louis XV.," chapter xl.

however, to be left long without a king, for the following year one of the strangest adventurers whom the world has ever seen made a bid for the crown. He promised the islanders the support of the great powers, and, with their aid, he undertook, if he were made king, to clear Corsica of her enemies. Men whose fortunes are well-nigh desperate, are of easy faith, and the conditions of this poor German Baron were accepted.

His name was Theodore. He was Baron Neuhof, in the county of La Marc, in Westphalia. Horace Walpole, who had seen him, describes him as "a comely, middle-sized man, very reserved, and affecting much dignity." Boswell says that "he was a man of abilities and address." He had served in the French army, and, later on, had travelled through Spain, Italy, England, and Holland, ever in search of some new adventure. He had passed over to Tunis, and, under pretence of conquering Corsica for that power, had obtained a supply of money and arms. In a ship of ten guns furnished by the Bey, but carrying the English flag, which Theodore had the impudence to raise, he sailed to Leghorn. There he sold the ship, and despatched his offers to the Corsican leaders.

He quickly passed over to the island. This was in the spring of 1736. "He was a man of a very

stately appearance, and the Turkish dress which he wore, added to the dignity of his mien. * * * He had his guards, and his officers of state. He conferred titles of honour, and he struck money, both of silver and copper. There was such a curiosity over all Europe to have King Theodore's coins, that his silver coins were sold at four zechins each; and when the genuine ones were exhausted, imitations of them were made at Naples, and, like the imitations of antiques, were bought up at a high price, and carefully preserved in the cabinets of the virtuosi." He boasted of the immense treasures he had brought with him, and, as a proof, he scattered among the people fifty sequins in small coins of a debased or worn out currency. "Il donna des souliers de bon cuir, magnificence ignorée en Corse." He blockaded the seaport towns that were in the occupation of the Genoese. "He used to be sometimes at one siege, sometimes at another, standing with a telescope in his hand, as if he spied the assistance which he said he expected" from his allies, the other monarchs of Europe. Couriers, who had been despatched by himself, were constantly arriving from Leghorn, bringing him despatches, as he pretended, from the great powers. The Genoese set a price on his head. He replied in a manifesto, with all the calmness and dignity of an injured monarch.

At the end of eight months, he "perceived that the people began to cool in their affections towards him, and he therefore wisely determined to leave them for a little, and try his fortune again upon the continent." He went to Amsterdam, where he was thrown into prison for debt.. But even in prison he made fresh dupes. He induced some merchants, particularly Jews, to pay his debts, and to furnish him with a ship, arms, and provisions. He undertook in return, that they, and they alone, should carry on the whole foreign trade of Corsica. When he reached the island he did not venture to land; but contented himself with disembarking his stores, and with putting to death the supercargo, "that he might not have any trouble from demands being made upon him." In the end he retired to London. "I believe I told you that King Theodore is here," wrote Horace Walpole in 1749, to Sir Horace Mann, our Envoy at Florence. "I am to drink coffee with him to-morrow at Lady Schaub's."

The rest of the story of this adventurer is so strange that, though it scarcely bears on Corsica, I shall venture to continue it. In the summer of the next year Walpole writes to his friend, "I believe I told you that one of your sovereigns, and an intimate friend of yours, King Theodore, is in the King's Bench prison." The unfortunate monarch

languished there for some years. Walpole, with a kindliness which was natural to him, raised a subscription for his majesty. He advocated his cause in a paper in "The World," with the motto *Date obolum Belisario.* But he wrote to his former correspondent, "His majesty's character is so bad, that it only raised fifty pounds; and though that was so much above his desert, it was so much below his expectation, that he sent a solicitor to threaten the printer with a prosecution for having taken so much liberty with his name—take notice, too, that he had accepted the money! Dodsley, you may believe, laughed at the lawyer; but that does not lessen the dirty knavery. * * * I have done with countenancing kings." After he had remained in prison more than six years, "he took the benefit of the Act of Insolvency, and went to the Old Bailey for that purpose: in order to it, the person applying gives up all his effects to his creditors: his Majesty was asked what effects he had? He replied 'Nothing but the kingdom of Corsica;' and it was actually registered for the benefit of his creditors. As soon as Theodore was at liberty, he took a chair and went to the Portuguese Minister, but did not find him at home; not having sixpence to pay, he prevailed on the chairmen to carry him to a tailor he knew in Soho, whom he prevailed upon to harbour him; but he fell sick the next day, and died 3

in three more." Walpole set up a stone in St. Ann's Churchyard, Soho, in memory of his majesty, with the following inscription:—

Near this place is interred
Theodore, King of Corsica;
Who died in this parish, Dec. 11, 1756,
Immediately after leaving the King's Bench Prison,
By the benefit of the Act of Insolvency:
In consequence of which, he registered
His Kingdom of Corsica
For the use of his Creditors.

The Grave, great teacher, to a level brings,
Heroes and beggars, galley-slaves and kings.
But Theodore this moral learn'd, ere dead;
Fate pour'd its lessons on his living head,
Bestow'd a kingdom and denied him bread.

Disappointed though they were in their king, the Corsicans nevertheless carried on the war with spirit. They would, no doubt, have soon freed the whole island, had not the French come to the help of their oppressors. It was in vain that the islanders sent a memorial to the King of France. "If," said their spokesman to Louis XV., "your sovereign commands force us to yield to Genoa, well then, let us drink this bitter cup to the health of the

most Christian king, and die." The king and the emperor acting together drew up articles of peace which seemed fair enough; but, as a preliminary, the Corsicans were to be disarmed. To this they refused to yield. Their leaders "published a spirited manifesto to their countrymen, concluding it with the noble sentiment of Judas Maccabeus: "Melius est mori in bello quam videre mala gentis nostrae. It is better for us to die in battle than to behold the calamities of our people." The French dispatched an expedition to the assistance of the Genoese which utterly failed. The following year (1739) a more formidable expedition was sent under an able commander, the Marquis de Maillebois. He divided his forces into two bodies. Marching through the heart of the country each army carried devastation in its path. "He cut down the standing corn," writes Boswell, "the vines, the olives, set fire to the villages, and spread terror and desolation in every quarter. He hanged numbers of monks and others who were keenest in the revolt, and at the same time published, wherever he went, his terms of capitulation." In a few weeks, all but the wildest parts of the island were reduced. By the end of the next year there was not a single patriot left in arms.

In 1741 broke out the war of the Austrian

Succession, and the French troops, which were needed elsewhere, were recalled. Once more the island rose; even young boys took the field. The Genoese were driven into the fortified towns. The Corsican leader Gaffori was besieging the Castle of Corte, when the defenders, making a sudden sally, seized his infant son, whom his nurse had thoughtlessly carried too near the walls. "The General," says Boswell, in language which strikes us as most odd, though, to the men of his time, it sounded perhaps natural enough, "showed a decent concern at this unhappy accident, which struck a damp into the whole army. The Genoese," he goes on to say, "thought they could have Gaffori upon their own terms, since they were possessed of so dear a pledge. When he advanced to make some cannon play, they held up his son, directly over that part of the wall against which his artillery was levelled. The Corsicans stopped, and began to draw back; but Gaffori, with the resolution of a Roman, stood at their head, and ordered them to continue the fire." The child escaped and lived to tell Boswell this curious story.

In 1745, England "not, as if from herself, but as complying with the request of her ally, the king of Sardinia," sent a squadron of ships to the assistance of the Corsicans. They came before Bastia on November 18th—three days, as it is worth while

noticing, after the town of Carlisle had surrendered to the forces of the Young Pretender. "There was but little wind blowing, and the men of war had to be towed up by the long boats. The fortress of Bastia let fly first, and made a terrible fire, particularly against the commodore's ship, whose flag was beat down three times, and her main and mizen masts broke. The Commodore being exasperated immediately ordered the Castle to be cannonaded and bombarded, which was continued near two hours with extraordinary fury, when part of the wall was seen to tumble down."* The place surrendered in a few days to the Corsicans. In the following year the patriots sent envoys to the English ambassador at Turin with proposals that Corsica should put herself entirely under the protection of Great Britain. No definite answer was given. In 1748 some English troops were landed in the island, but on the conclusion of the peace of Aix-la-Chapelle they were withdrawn, and the Corsicans and Genoese were again left to fight out their own battles.

Five years later (1753) Gaffori, who had long held the office of sole general of the island, was carried off by assassination. "The murderers," says Boswell, "were set on by the Republic. At least, it is a fact that some of these wretches have still a

* "The Gentleman's Magazine," vol. xv., p. 628.

miserable pension to support them, in the territory of Genoa." His place was filled by Pascal Paoli, the son of the old Corsican leader, who ever since the French invasion had lived with his boy in retirement at Naples. When the young man was sent for by his countrymen, his old father, "hoary and gray with years, fell on his neck and kissed him, gave him his blessing, and with a broken feeble voice, encouraged him in the undertaking on which he was entering: 'My son,' said he, 'I may, possibly, never see you more; but in my mind I shall ever be present with you. Your design is a great and a noble one; and I doubt not, but God will bless you in it.'"

Paoli's task was full of difficulties. In "the affairs of Corsica, he found the utmost disorder and confusion. There was no subordination, no discipline, no money, hardly any arms and ammunition; and, what was worse than all, little union among the people. He immediately began to remedy these defects. His persuasion and example had wonderful force. In a short time he drove the Genoese to the remotest corners of the island. * * * He, in a manner, new-modelled the government upon the soundest principles of democratical rule, which was always his favourite idea." He carried a law by which assassination was made capital on whatever pretence it had been committed.

He set about establishing schools in every village, and he founded a University at Corte. Boswell writing to Temple in 1767 says, "I have received an elegant letter from the University of Corte, and also an extract of an oration pronounced this year at the opening of the University, in which oration I am celebrated in a manner which does me the greatest honour."

But the jealousy of France was again excited, and again she sent troops to the island. This was in 1764, nine years after Paoli had received the supreme command. Rousseau, full of indignation at this monstrous proceeding, thus expressed himself in a letter to a friend, "Il faut avouer que vos François, sont un peuple bien servile, bien vendu à la tyrannie, bien cruel, et bien acharné sur les malheureux. S'ils savoient un homme libre à l'autre bout du monde, je crois qu'ils iroient pour le seul plaisir de l'exterminer. It must be owned that your countrymen, the French, are a very servile nation, wholly sold to tyranny, exceedingly cruel and relentless in persecuting the unhappy. If they knew of a free man at the other end of the world I believe they would go thither for the mere pleasure of extirpating him." The French did not act on the offensive. They merely garrisoned certain towns, and professed to limit their occupation to the space of four years. It was in the second year

of their occupation (1765) that Boswell visited the island.

At the end of the four years the Republic of Genoa ceded Corsica to the crown of France. In the cession there was a pretence of a reservation with which it is needless to trouble the reader. "Genoa," writes Voltaire, "made a good bargain, and France made a better." "Il restait à savoir," he added, "si les hommes ont le droit de vendre d'autres hommes, mais c'est une question qu'on n'examina jamais dans aucun traité." Negociations were opened with Paoli, but there was no common ground between the free chief of a free people and the despot who wished to enslave them. Paoli might have looked for high honours and rewards had he consented to enter the French service. He had the far greater and purer glory of resisting a King of France for nearly a whole year. No foreign power came to his aid. "A few Englishmen alone," wrote Voltaire, "full of love for that liberty which he upheld, sent him some money and arms." His troops were badly armed. Their muskets were not even furnished with bayonets. Their courage went some way to make up for their want of proper weapons. In one battle they piled up in front of them a rampart of their dead, and behind this bloody pile they loaded their pieces before they began their retreat.

But against the disciplined forces that France could bring, all resistance was in vain. "Poor brave Paoli!" wrote Horace Walpole, "but he is not disgraced. We, that have sat still and seen him overwhelmed, must answer it to history. Nay, the Mediterranean will taunt us in the very next war." Walpole wrote this letter but two months before the birth of Buonaparte. Had England, who has joined in many a worthless quarrel, struck in for the Corsicans, what a change might have been made in the history of the world! If Buonaparte had never been a citizen of France the name of Napoleon might be unknown. Paoli escaped in an English ship, and settled in England. Walpole met him one day at Court, "I could not believe it," he wrote, "when I was told who he was. * * * Nobody sure ever had an air so little foreign! * * The simplicity of his whole appearance had not given me the slightest suspicion of anything remarkable in him."

Paoli remained in England, an honoured guest, for thirty years. In 1789 Mirabeau moved, in the National Assembly, the recall of all the Corsican patriots. Paoli went to Paris, where "he was received with enthusiastic veneration. The Assembly and the Royal Family contended which should show him most distinction." The king made him lieutenant-general and military commandant

in Corsica. "He used the powers entrusted to him with great wisdom and moderation." The rapid changes that swept over France did not leave him untouched. He was denounced in the Convention and "was summoned to attend for the purpose of standing on his defence. He declined the journey on account of his age." A large part of his countrymen stood by him, and in an assembly appointed him general-in-chief, and president of the council of government. The Convention sent an expedition to arrest him. Buonaparte happened at the time to be in Corsica, on leave of absence from his regiment. He and Paoli had been on friendly terms, indeed they were distantly related, but Buonaparte did not hesitate for a moment which side to take. He commanded the French troops in an attack on his native town. Paoli's party proved the stronger, and Napoleon Buonaparte and his brother Lucien were banished. The Corsicans sought the aid of the English who, in the year 1794, landed, five regiments strong, in the island. A deputation went to London to offer the Crown of Corsica to the King of Great Britain. The offer was accepted, but contrary to the hopes and the expectations of the islanders, not Paoli, but Sir Gilbert Eliot was made Viceroy. The great patriot then found that he could best serve his country by leaving it. For about two years Corsica remained

part of the British Empire; but in 1796 the English were forced to abandon it. Paoli returned to England, where he passed the rest of his years. He died in 1807 at the age of eighty-two. His monument is in Westminster Abbey.



AN

ACCOUNT

OF

CORSICA,

THE JOURNAL OF A TOUR

TO THAT ISLAND;

AND MEMOIRS OF

PASCAL PAOLI.

BY JAMES BOSWELL, Esq;

ILLUSTRATED with a New and Accurate MAP of CORSICA.

Non enim propter gloriam, divitias aut honores pugnamus, sed propter libertatem solummodo, quam nemo bonus nisi simul cum vita amittit.
Lit. Comit. et Baron. Scotiae ad Pap. A.D. 1320.

GLASGOW,
PRINTED BY ROBERT AND ANDREW FOULIS FOR
EDWARD AND CHARLES DILLY IN THE POULTRY, LONDON;
MDCCLXVIII.



DEDICATION

TO

PASCAL PAOLI,

GENERAL OF

THE CORSICANS.

SIR,—Dedications are for most part the offerings of interested servility, or the effusions of partial zeal; enumerating the virtues of men in whom no virtues can be found, or predicting greatness to those who afterwards pass their days in unambitious indolence, and die leaving no memorial of their existence, but a dedication, in which all their merit is confessedly future, and which time has turned into a silent reproach.

He who has any experience of mankind, will be cautious to whom he dedicates. Publickly to bestow praise on merit of which the publick is not sensible, or to raise flattering expectations which are never fulfilled, must sink the character of an authour, and make him appear a cringing parasite, or a fond enthusiast.

I am under no apprehensions of that nature, when I inscribe this book to Pascal Paoli. Your virtues, Sir, are

universally acknowledged; they dignify the pages which I venture to present to you; and it is my singular felicity that my book is the voucher of its dedication.

In thus addressing you, my intention is not to attempt your panegyrick. That may in some measure be collected from my imperfect labours. But I wish to express to the world, the admiration and gratitude with which you have inspired me.

This, Sir, is all the return that I can make for the many favours which you have deigned to confer upon me. I intreat you to receive it as a testimony of my disposition. I regret that I have neither power nor interest to enable me to render any essential service to you and to the brave Corsicans. I can only assure you of the most fervent wishes of a private gentleman. I have the honour to be, with all respect and affection,

Sir,

Your ever devoted

obliged humble servant

JAMES BOSWELL.

Auchinleck, Ayrshire,
29 October,* 1767.

* Boswell's birthday. The preface to the third edition also bears the date of his birthday.—ED.

PREFACE.

No apology shall be made for presenting the world with An Account of Corsica. It has been for some time expected from me; and I own that the ardour of publick curiosity has both encouraged and intimidated me. On my return from visiting Corsica, I found people wherever I went, desirous to hear what I could tell them concerning that island and its inhabitants. Unwilling to repeat my tale to every company, I thought it best to promise a book which should speak for me.

But I would not take upon me to do this till I consulted with the General of the nation. I therefore informed him of my design. His answer is perhaps too flattering for me to publish: but I must beg leave to give it as the licence and sanction of this work.

Paoli was pleased to write to me thus; "Nothing can be more generous than your design to publish the observations which you have made upon Corsica. You have seen its natural situation, you have been able to study the manners of its inhabitants, and to see intimately the maxims of their government, of which you know the constitution. This people with an enthusiasm of grati-

tude, will unite their applause with that of undeceived Europe."

* * * * * *

It is amazing that an island so considerable, and in which such noble things have been doing, should be so imperfectly known. Even the succession of chiefs has been unperceived; and because we have read of Paoli being at the head of the Corsicans many years back, and Paoli still appears at their head, the command has been supposed all this time in the person of the same man. Hence all our newspapers have confounded the gallant Pascal Paoli in the vigour of manhood, with the venerable chief his deceased father, Giacinto Paoli. Nay the same errour has found its way into the page of the historian; for Dr. Smollet when mentioning Paoli at the siege of Furiani a few years ago, says he was then past fourscore.

I would in the first place return my most humble thanks to Pascal Paoli, for the various communications with which he has been pleased to favour me; and as I have related his remarkable sayings, I declare upon honour, that I have neither added nor diminished; nay so scrupulous have I been, that I would not make the smallest variation even when my friends thought it would be an improvement. I know with how much pleasure we read what is perfectly authentick.

Count Rivarola * was so good as to return me full and distinct answers to a variety of queries which I sent him with regard to many particulars concerning Corsica. I

* The Sardinian Consul in Corsica. See page 142.—ED.

am much indebted to him for this, and particularly so, from the obliging manner in which he did it.

The reverend Mr. Burnaby, chaplain to the British factory at Leghorn, made a tour to Corsica in 1766, at the same time with the honourable and reverend Mr. Hervey, now bishop of Cloyne.* Mr. Burnaby was absent from Leghorn when I was there, so I had not the pleasure of being personally known to him. But he with great politeness of his own accord, sent me a copy of the Journal which he made of what he observed in Corsica. I had the satisfaction to find that we agreed in every thing which both of us had considered. But I found in his Journal, observations on several things which I had omitted; and several things which I had remarked, I found set in a clearer light. As Mr. Burnaby was so obliging as to allow me to make what use I pleased of his Journal, I have freely interwoven it into my work.

I acknowledge my obligations to my esteemed friend John Dick Esquire, his Britannick Majesty's Consul at Leghorn, to Signor Gian Quilico Casa Bianca, to the learned Greek physician Signor Stefanopoli, to Colonel Buttafoco,† and to the Abbé Rostini. These gentlemen

* The son of Pope's Lord Hervey. He succeeded in 1779 to the Earldom of Bristol.—ED.

† Colonel Buttafoco was one of Rousseau's correspondents. At the time of the French Revolution he was elected Deputy from Corsica to the National Assembly. He was most violently attacked by Napoleon Buonaparte in a letter dated "From my closet at Milleli, 23rd January, Year 2." The letter thus begins:—"From Bonifacio to Cape Corso, from Ajaccio to Bastia, there is one chorus of imprecations against you." The writer goes on to say, "Your countrymen, to whom you are an object of horror, will enlighten

have all contributed their aid in erecting my little monument to liberty.

I am also to thank an ingenious gentleman who has favoured me with the translations of Seneca's Epigrams. I made application for this favour, in the "London Chronicle;" and to the honour of literature, I found her votaries very liberal. Several translations were sent, of which I took the liberty to prefer those which had the signature of Patricius, and which were improved by another ingenious correspondent under the signature of Plebeius. By a subsequent application I begged that Patricius would let me know to whom I was obliged for what I considered as a great ornament to my book. He has complied with my request; and I beg leave in this publick manner, to acknowledge that I am indebted for those translations to Thomas Day Esquire,* of Berkshire, a gentleman whose situation in life is genteel, and his fortune affluent. I must add that although his verses have not only the fire of youth, but the maturity and correctness of age, Mr. Day is no more than nineteen.

Nor can I omit to express my sense of the candour

France as to your character. The wealth, the pensions, the fruits of your treasons, will be taken from you. * * * * O Lameth! O Robespierre! O Petion! O Volney! O Mirabeau! O Barnave! O Bailly! O La Fayette! this is the man who dares to seat himself by your side!"—Scott's "Life of Napoleon Buonaparte," vol. ix., Appendix I.—ED.

* This is, I believe the author of "Sandford and Merton," who was born in 1748, and was nineteen years old at the the date of the dedication of Boswell's work. His father had died when Day was a year old, and had left him a fortune of £1,200 a year.—ED.

and politeness with which Sir James Steuart received the remark which I have ventured to make in opposition to a passage concerning the Corsicans, in his "Inquiry into the principles of Political Oeconomy."

I have submitted my book to the revisal of several gentlemen who honour me with their regard, and I am sensible how much it is improved by their corrections. It is therefore my duty to return thanks to the reverend Mr. Wyvill rectour of Black Notely in Essex, and to my old and most intimate friend the reverend Mr. Temple* rectour of Mamhead in Devonshire. I am also obliged to My Lord Monboddo for many judicious remarks, which his thorough acquaintance with ancient learning enabled him to make. But I am principally indebted to the indulgence and friendly attention of My Lord Hailes, who under the name of Sir David Dalrymple,† has been long known to the world as an able Antiquarian, and an elegant and humourous Essayist; to whom the world has no fault but that he does not give them more of his own writings, when they value them so highly.‡

* See "Letters of James Boswell addressed to the Rev. W. J. Temple."—Bentley, London, 1857.—ED.

† It is the custom in Scotland to give the Judges of the Court of Session the title of Lords by the names of their estates. Thus Mr Burnett is Lord Monboddo, and Sir David Dalrymple is Lord Hailes.

‡ "Johnson this evening drank a bumper to Sir David Dalrymple, 'as a man of worth, a scholar, and a wit. I have,' said he, 'never heard of him, except from you; but let him know my opinion of him: for as he does not show himself much in the world, he should have the praise of the few who hear of him.'"—Boswell's "Johnson." Date of July 20, 1763.—ED.

I would however have it understood, that although I received the corrections of my friends with deference, I have not always agreed with them. An authour should be glad to hear every candid remark. But I look upon a man as unworthy to write, who has not force of mind to determine for himself. I mention this, that the judgement of the friends I have named may not be considered as connected with every passage in this book.

Writing a book I have found to be like building a house. A man forms a plan and collects materials. He thinks he has enough to raise a large and stately edifice; but after he has arranged, compacted and polished, his work turns out to be a very small performance. The authour, however, like the builder, knows how much labour his work has cost him; and therefore estimates it at a much higher rate than other people think it deserves.

I have endeavoured to avoid an ostentatious display of learning. By the idle and the frivolous indeed, any appearance of learning is called pedantry. But as I do not write for such readers, I pay no regard to their censures. Those by whom I wish to be judged, will I hope, approve of my adding dignity to Corsica, by shewing its consideration among the ancients, and will not be displeased to find my page sometimes embellished with a seasonable quotation from the Classicks. The translations are ascribed to their proper authours. What are not so ascribed are my own.

It may be necessary to say something in defence of my

orthography. Of late it has become the fashion to render our language more neat and trim by leaving out k after c, and u in the last syllable of words which used to end in our. The illustrious Mr. Samuel Johnson, who has alone * executed in England what was the task of whole academies in other countries, has been careful in his Dictionary to preserve the k as a mark of Saxon original. He has for most part, too, been careful to preserve the u, but he has also omitted it in several words. I have retained the k, and have taken upon me to follow a general rule with regard to words ending in our. Wherever a word originally Latin has been transmitted to us through the medium of the French, I have written it with the characteristical u. An attention to this may appear trivial. But I own I am one of those who are curious in the formation of language in its various modes; and therefore wish that the affinity of English with other tongues may not be forgotten. If this work should at any future period be reprinted, I hope that care will be taken of my orthography.†

He who publishes a book, affecting not to be an authour, and professing an indifference for literary fame, may possibly impose upon many people such an idea of

* "ADAMS.—But, Sir, how can you do this in three years? JOHNSON.—Sir, I have no doubt that I can do it in three years. ADAMS.—But the French Academy, which consists of forty members, took forty years to compile their Dictionary. JOHNSON.—Sir, thus it is. This is the proportion. Let me see; forty times forty is sixteen hundred. As three to sixteen hundred, so is the proportion of an Englishman to a Frenchman."—Boswell's "Johnson." Date of 1748.—ED.

† I have not dared to disregard Boswell's request. His orthography is retained.—ED.

his consequence as he wishes may be received. For my part, I should be proud to be known as an authour; and I have an ardent ambition for literary fame; for of all possessions I should imagine literary fame to be the most valuable. A man who has been able to furnish a book which has been approved by the world, has established himself as a respectable character in distant society, without any danger of having that character lessened by the observation of his weaknesses. To preserve an uniform dignity among those who see us every day, is hardly possible; and to aim at it must put us under the fetters of a perpetual restraint. The authour of an approved book may allow his natural disposition an easy play, and yet indulge the pride of superiour genius when he considers that by those who know him only as an authour, he never ceases to be respected. Such an authour when in his hours of gloom and discontent, may have the consolation to think that his writings are at that very time giving pleasure to numbers; and such an authour may cherish the hope of being remembered after death, which has been a great object to the noblest minds in all ages. *

* "The rational pride of an author may be offended, rather than flattered, by vague, indiscriminate praise; but he cannot, he should not, be indifferent to the fair testimonies of private and public esteem. Even his moral sympathy may be gratified by the idea, that now, in the present hour, he is imparting some degree of amusement or knowledge to his friends in a distant land; that one day his mind will be familiar to the grand-children of those who are yet unborn."—"Memoirs of my Life and Writings," by Edward Gibbon, vol. i., p. 273.

"Do thou teach me not only to foresee but to enjoy, nay even to

Whether I may merit any portion of literary fame, the publick will judge. Whatever my ambition may be, I trust that my confidence is not too great, nor my hopes too sanguine.

feed on future praise. Comfort me by the solemn assurance, that when the little parlour in which I sit at this moment shall be reduced to a worse-furnished box, I shall be read with honour by those who never knew nor saw me, and whom I shall neither know nor see." —"Tom Jones," book xiii., chap. 1. Quoted by Gibbon, or his Editor.—ED.

PREFACE

TO THE THIRD EDITION.

I now beg leave to present the world with a more correct edition of my Account of Corsica. I return my sincere thanks to those who have taken the trouble to point out several faults, with a spirit of candid criticism. I hope they will not be offended that in one or two places I have preserved my own reading, contrary to their opinion; as I never would own that I am wrong, till I am convinced that it is so. My orthography I have sufficiently explained; and although some pleasantry has been shewn, I have not met with one argument against it.

* * * * * *

While I have a proper sense of my obligations to those who have treated me with candour, I do not forget that there have been others who have chosen to treat me in an illiberal manner. The resentment of some has evidently arisen from the grateful admiration which I have expressed of Mr. Samuel Johnson. Over such, it is a triumph to me to assure them, that I never cease to think of Mr. Johnson with the same warmth of affection, and the same dignity of veneration. The resentment of others it is more difficult to explain. For what should make men attack one who never offended them, who has done his best to entertain them, and who is engaged in the most

generous cause? But I am told by those who have gone before me in literature, that the attacks of such should rather flatter me, than give me displeasure.

To those who have imagined themselves very witty in sneering at me for being a Christian, I would recommend the serious study of Theology, and I hope they will attain to the same comfort that I have, in the belief of a Revelation by which a SAVIOUR is proclamed to the world, and "life and immortality are clearly brought to light."

I am now to return thanks to My Lord Lyttelton, for being so good as to allow me to enrich my book with one of his Lordship's letters to me.* I was indeed most anxious that it should be published; as it contains an eulogium on Pascal Paoli, equal to anything that I have found in the writings of antiquity. Nor can I deny that I was very desirous to shew the world that this worthy and respectable Nobleman, to whom genius, learning and virtue owe so much, can amidst all his literary honours be pleased with what I have been able to write.

May I be permitted to say that the success of this book has exceeded my warmest hopes. When I first ventured to send it into the world, I fairly owned an ardent desire for literary fame. I have obtained my desire: and whatever clouds may overcast my days, I can now walk here among the rocks and woods of my ancestors, with an agreeable consciousness that I have done something worthy.

AUCHINLECK, AYRSHIRE,
29 October, 1768.

* I have not thought it needful to reprint this letter.—ED.

THE

JOURNAL

OF A

TOUR

TO

CORSICA;

AND

MEMOIRS

OF

PASCAL PAOLI.

Olim meminiſſe juvabit.

VIRG.



THE

JOURNAL

OF A

TOUR TO CORSICA.

HAVING resolved to pass some years * abroad, for my instruction and entertainment, I conceived a design of visiting the island of Corsica. I wished for something more than just the common course of what is called the

* Boswell had left England, on August 6th, 1763, for the University of Utrecht, whither his father had sent him to study civil law. On his return to Scotland, he was to put on the gown as a member of the Faculty of Advocates. "Honest man!" he writes of his father to his friend Temple, "he is now very happy; it is amazing to think how much he has had at heart my pursuing the road of civil life." Boswell had once hoped to enter the Guards. A few days later on he wrote: "My father has allowed me £60 a quarter; that is not a great allowance, but with economy I may live very well upon it, for Holland is a cheap country. However I am determined not to be straightened, nor to encourage the least narrowness of disposition as to saving money, but will draw upon my father for any sums I find necessary." He did not give many months to his legal studies at Utrecht. In the following year he set out on his travels. He went through Germany and Switzerland to Italy. It was in the autumn of 1765 that he visited Corsica. He returned to England through France, and arrived in London in February, 1766.

tour of Europe; and Corsica occurred to me as a place which no body else had seen, and where I should find what was to be seen no where else, a people actually fighting for liberty, and forming themselves from a poor inconsiderable oppressed nation, into a flourishing and independent state.

When I got into Switzerland, I went to see M. Rousseau. He was then living in romantick retirement, from whence, perhaps, it had been better for him never to have descended. While he was at a distance, his singular eloquence filled our minds with high ideas of the wild philosopher. When he came into the walks of men, we know alas! how much these ideas suffered.*

He entertained me very courteously; for I was recommended to him by my honoured friend the Earl Marischal,† with whom I had the happiness of travelling through a part of Germany. I had heard that M. Rousseau had some correspondence with the Corsicans, and had been desired to assist them in forming their laws.‡ I told him my scheme of going to visit them, after I had

* Rousseau came to England in January, 1766. He had not been here long before he quarrelled with Hume, who had been to him so true a friend.—ED.

† George, tenth Earl Marischal. He had taken part in the Jacobite rising of 1715. Later on he held high office in the Prussian service. In 1759 his attainder was reversed, but he continued to live abroad. In one of his letters to Madame de Boufflers he says, in speaking of Rousseau, "Je lui avais fait un projet; mais en le disant un château en Espagne, d'aller habiter une maison toute meublée que j'ai en Ecosse; d'engager le bon David Hume de vivre avec nous."—"Hume's Private Correspondence," page 43.—ED.

‡ See page 222.

compleated my tour of Italy; and I insisted that he should give me a letter of introduction. He immediately agreed to do so, whenever I should acquaint him of my time of going thither; for he saw that my enthusiasm for the brave islanders was as warm as his own.

I accordingly wrote to him from Rome, in April 1765, that I had fixed the month of September for my Corsican expedition, and therefore begged of him to send me the letter of introduction, which if he refused, I should certainly go without it, and probably be hanged as a spy. So let him answer for the consequences.

The wild philosopher was a man of his word; and on my arrival at Florence in August I received the following letter.

"A MONSIEUR, MONSIEUR BOSWELL, &c.

"A MOTIERS le 30 May, 1765.

"La crise orageuse ou je me trouve, Monsieur, depuis votre depart d'ici, m'a oté le tems de repondre à votre premiére lettre, et me laisse à peine celui de repondre en peu de mots à la seconde. Pour m'en tenir à ce qui presse pour le moment, savoir la recommendation que vous desirez en Corse; puisque vous avez le desir de visiter ces braves insulaires, vous pourrez vous informer à Bastia, de M. Buttafoco capitaine au Regiment Royal Italien; il a sa maison à Vescovado, ou il se tient assez souvent. C'est un très galant homme, qui a des connoissances et de l'esprit; il suffira de lui montrer cette lettre, et je suis sur qu'il vous recevra bien, et contribuera

à vous faire voir l'isle et ses habitans avec satisfaction. Si vous ne trouvez pas M. Buttafoco, et que vous vouliez aller tout droit à M. Pascal de Paoli general de la nation, vous pouvez egalement lui montrer cette lettre, et je suis sur, connoissant la noblesse de son caractére, que vous serez très-content de son accueil: vous pourrez lui dire même que vous étes aimé de Mylord Mareschal d'Ecosse, et que Mylord Mareschal est un des plus zelés partizans de la nation Corse. Au reste vouz n'avez besoin d'autre recommendation près de ces Messieurs que votre propre mérite, la nation Corse etant naturellement si accueillante et si hospitaliére, que tous les etrangers y sont bien venus et caressés.

* * * * * *

"Bons et heureux voyages, santé, gaieté et promt retour. Je vous embrasse, Monsieur, de tout mon coeur."

"J. J. ROUSSEAU."

"TO MR. BOSWELL, &c.

"MOTIERS, the 30 May 1765.

"The stormy crisis in which I have found myself since your departure from this, has not allowed me any leisure to answer your first letter, and hardly allows me leisure to reply in a few words to your second. To confine myself to what is immediately pressing, the recommendation which you ask for Corsica; since you have a desire to visit those brave islanders, you may

enquire at Bastia for M. Buttafoco, captain of the Royal Italian Regiment; his house is at Vescovado, where he resides pretty often. He is a very worthy man, and has both knowledge and genius; it will be sufficient to shew him this letter, and I am sure he will receive you well, and will contribute to let you see the island and its inhabitants with satisfaction. If you do not find M. Buttafoco, and will go directly to M. Pascal Paoli General of the nation, you may in the same manner shew him this letter, and as I know the nobleness of his character, I am sure you will be very well pleased at your reception. You may even tell him that you are liked by My Lord Marischal of Scotland, and that My Lord Marischal is one of the most zealous partisans of the Corsican nation. You need no other recommendation to these gentlemen but your own merit, the Corsicans being naturally so courteous and hospitable, that all strangers who come among them, are made welcome and caressed.

* * * * * *

"I wish you agreeable and fortunate travels, health, gaiety, and a speedy return. I embrace you Sir with all my heart

"JOHN JAMES ROUSSEAU."

Furnished with these credentials, I was impatient to be with the illustrious Chief. The charms of sweet Siena detained me longer than they should have done. I

required the hardy air of Corsica to brace me, after the delights of Tuscany.

I recollect with astonishment how little the real state of Corsica was known, even by those who had good access to know it. An officer of rank in the British navy, who had been in several ports of the island, told me that I run the risque of my life in going among these barbarians; for, that his surgeon's mate went ashore to take the diversion of shooting, and every moment was alarmed by some of the natives, who started from the bushes with loaded guns, and if he had not been protected by Corsican guides, would have certainly blown out his brains.

Nay at Leghorn, which is within a day's sailing of Corsica, and has a constant intercourse with it, I found people who dissuaded me from going thither, because it might be dangerous.

I was however under no apprehension in going to Corsica. Count Rivarola the Sardinian consul, who is himself a Corsican, assuring me that the island was then in a very civilized state; and besides, that in the rudest times no Corsican would ever attack a stranger. The Count was so good as to give me most obliging letters to many people in the island. I had now been in several foreign countries. I had found that I was able to accommodate myself to my fellow-creatures of different languages and sentiments. I did not fear that it would be a difficult task for me to make myself easy with the plain and generous Corsicans.

The only danger I saw was, that I might be taken by

some of the Barbary Corsairs, and have a tryal of slavery among the Turks at Algiers.* I spoke of it to Commodore Harrison, who commanded the British squadron in the Mediterranean, and was then lying with his ship the Centurion in the bay of Leghorn. He assured me, that if the Turks did take me, they should not keep

* In the "Gentleman's Magazine" for 1750 (vol. xx., p. 42), we read, "The Phœnix, Captain Carberry, of Bristol, was taken on Christmas eve by an Algerine corsair off the rock of Lisbon, on pretence that his pass was not good, and ordered for Algiers with an officer and six other Turks; but in the passage Captain Carberry with three English sailors and a boy recovered the vessel, after flinging the Turkish officer and two other Turks overboard, and brought it with the Turkish sailors prisoners to Bristol." In the same year the English consul at Algiers wrote to say that some Algerine Corsairs had taken five English vessels because their passes were not good. The consul had complained to the Dey, "who said that he would give such orders that nothing of this sort should happen again, and then swore by his prophet that if any one controverted those orders he would take his head." The Dey had also seized a packet-boat of the British Crown. Commodore Keppel was sent to demand restitution. The Dey replied, "We are disposed to give full satisfaction to the King and the British nation for anything that may happen amiss hereafter; but as to what is past, if they have had any cause to complain, they must think no more of it, and bury it in oblivion." The packet-boat, he maintained, had not a proper Algerine pass, and therefore had been lawfully seized. By a treaty made with the Dey in the following year, the Commodore "settled all differences by waiving the restitution of the money and effects taken from on board the packet-boat on condition that his Majesty's packet-boats shall never be obliged to carry Algerine passports," &c. Whatever protection the English vessels may have had the Turkish corsairs continued to plunder the ships of most other nations. In the "Gentleman's Magazine" for 1785, (vol. lv., p. 830) we read, "The Algerines still continue their piracies in the Mediterranean. They even extend their captures to the Atlantic Ocean, and have struck the American traders with terror." —ED.

me long; but in order to prevent it, he was so good as to grant me a very ample and particular passport; and as it could be of no use if I did not meet the Corsairs, he said very pleasantly when he gave it me, "I hope, Sir, it shall be of no use to you."

Before I left Leghorn, I could observe, that my tour was looked upon by the Italian politicians in a very serious light, as if truly I had a commission from my Court, to negociate a treaty with the Corsicans. The more I disclaimed any such thing, the more they persevered in affirming it; and I was considered as a very close young man. I therefore just allowed them to make a minister of me, till time should undeceive them.†

I sailed from Leghorn in a Tuscan vessel, which was going over to Capo Corso for wine. I preferred this to a vessel going to Bastia, because, as I did not know how the French general was affected towards the Corsicans, I was afraid that he might not permit me to go forward to Paoli. I therefore resolved to land on the territories of the nation, and after I had been with the illustrious Chief, to pay my respects to the French if I should find it safe.

Though from Leghorn to Corsica is usually but one day's sailing, there was so dead a calm that it took us two days. The first day was the most tedious. However there were two or three Corsicans aboard, and one of them played on the Citra, which amused me a good deal. At sun-set all the people in the ship sung the Ave Maria, with great devotion and some melody. It was pleasing

† Compare Scribe's Comedy of "*Le Diplomate.*"—ED.

to enter into the spirit of their religion, and hear them offering up their evening orisons.

The second day we became better acquainted, and more lively and chearful. The worthy Corsicans thought it was proper to give a moral lesson to a young traveller just come from Italy. They told me that in their country I should be treated with the greatest hospitality; but if I attempted to debauch any of their women, I might lay my account with instant death.

I employed myself several hours in rowing, which gave me great spirits. I relished fully my approach to the island, which had acquired an unusual grandeur in my imagination. As long as I can remember any thing, I have heard of "The malecontents of Corsica, with Paoli at their head." It was a curious thought that I was just going to see them.

About seven o'clock at night, we landed safely in the harbour of Centuri. I learnt that Signor Giaccomini of this place, to whom I was recommended by Count Rivarola, was just dead. He had made a handsome fortune in the East Indies; and having had a remarkable warmth in the cause of liberty during his whole life, he shewed it in the strongest manner in his last will. He bequeathed a considerable sum of money, and some pieces of ordinance, to the nation. He also left it in charge to his heir, to live in Corsica, and be firm in the patriotick interest; and if ever the island should again be reduced under the power of the Genoese, he ordered him to retire with all his effects to Leghorn. Upon these conditions only could his heir enjoy his estate.

I was directed to the house of Signor Giaccomini's cousin, Signor Antonio Antonetti at Morsiglia, about a mile up the country. The prospect of the mountains covered with vines and olives, was extremely agreeable; and the odour of the myrtle and other aromatick shrubs and flowers that grew all around me, was very refreshing. As I walked along, I often saw Corsican peasants come suddenly out from the covert; and as they were all armed, I saw how the frightened imagination of the surgeon's mate had raised up so many assassins. Even the man who carried my baggage was armed, and had I been timorous might have alarmed me. But he and I were very good company to each other. As it grew dusky, I repeated to myself these lines from a fine passage in Ariosto.

"E pur per selve oscure e calli obliqui
Insieme van senza, sospetto aversi."

ARIOST. Canto I.

"Together through dark woods and winding ways
They walk, nor on their hearts suspicion preys."

I delivered Signor Antonetti the letter for his deceased cousin. He read it, and received me with unaffected cordiality, making an apology for my frugal entertainment, but assuring me of a hearty welcome. His true kindly hospitality was also shewn in taking care of my servant, an honest Swiss, who loved to eat and drink well.*

I had formed a strange notion that I should see every

* Like master, like man.—ED.

thing in Corsica totally different from what I had seen in any other country.* I was therefore much surprised to find Signor Antonetti's house quite an Italian one, with very good furniture, prints, and copies of some of the famous pictures. In particular, I was struck to find here a small copy from Raphael, of St. Michael and the Dragon. There was no necessity for its being well done. To see the thing at all was what surprised me.

Signor Antonetti gave me an excellent light repast, and a very good bed. He spoke with great strength of the patriotick cause, and with great veneration of the General. I was quite easy, and liked much the opening of my Corsican tour.

The next day, being Sunday, it rained very hard; and I must observe that the Corsicans with all their resolution, are afraid of bad weather, to a degree of effeminacy. I got indeed a drole but a just enough account of this, from one of them. "Sir," said he, "if you were as poor as a Corsican, and had but one coat, so as that after being wet, you could not put on dry cloaths, you would be afraid too."† Signor Antonetti would not allow me to set out while it rained, for, said he, "Quando si trova fuori, patienza; ma di andare fuori è cattivo. If a man finds himself abroad, there is no help for it. But to go deliberately out, is too much."

* See Appendix B for a curious custom described by Boswell.—ED.

† A friend of mine, driving last September from Tunis to Utica, was overtaken by a storm of rain. The driver at once got down from the box and seated himself on the ground under the carriage. By way of excuse he said that he had but one coat.—ED.

When the day grew a little better, I accompanied Signor Antonetti and his family, to hear mass in the parish church, a very pretty little building, about half a quarter of a mile off.

Signor Antonetti's parish priest was to preach to us, at which I was much pleased, being very curious to hear a Corsican sermon.

Our priest did very well. His text was in the Psalms. "Descendunt ad infernum viventes. They go down alive into the pit."

After endeavouring to move our passions with a description of the horrours of hell, he told us "Saint Catherine of Siena wished to be laid on the mouth of this dreadful pit, that she might stop it up, so as no more unhappy souls should fall into it. I confess, my brethren, I have not the zeal of holy Saint Catherine. But I do what I can; I warn you how to avoid it." He then gave us some good practical advices and concluded.

The weather being now cleared up, I took leave of the worthy gentleman to whom I had been a guest. He gave me a letter to Signor Damiano Tomasi Padre del Commune at Pino, the next village. I got a man with an ass to carry my baggage. But such a road I never saw. It was absolutely scrambling along the face of a rock overhanging the sea, upon a path sometimes not above a foot broad. I thought the ass rather retarded me; so I prevailed with the man to take my portmanteau and other things on his back.

Had I formed my opinion of Corsica from what I saw this morning, I might have been in as bad humour

with it, as Seneca was, whose reflections in prose are not inferiour to his epigrams. "Quid tam nudum inveniri potest, quid tam abruptum undique quam hoc saxum? quid ad copias respicienti jejunius? quid ad homines immansuetius? quid ad ipsum loci situm horridius? Plures tamen hîc peregrini quam cives consistunt? usque eò ergo commutatio ipsa locorum gravis non est, ut hic quoque locus a patria quosdam abduxerit. * What can be found so bare, what so rugged all around as this rock? what more barren of provisions? what more rude as to its inhabitants? what in the very situation of the place more horrible? what in climate more intemperate? yet there are more foreigners than natives here. So far then is a change of place from being disagreeable, that even this place hath brought some people away from their country."

At Pino I was surprised to find myself met by some brisk young fellows drest like English sailors, and speaking English tolerably well. They had been often with cargoes of wine at Leghorn, where they had picked up what they knew of our language, and taken clothes in part of payment for some of their merchandise.

I was cordially entertained at Signor Tomasi's. Throughout all Corsica, except in garrison towns, there is hardly an inn. I met with a single one, about eight miles from Corte. Before I was accustomed to the Corsican hospitality, I sometimes forgot myself, and imagining I was in a publick house, called for what I wanted, with the tone which one uses in calling to the waiters at a tavern. I did so at Pino, asking for a variety

* Seneca de Consolatione.

of things at once; when Signora Tomasi, perceiving my mistake, looked in my face and smiled, saying with much calmness and good-nature, "Una cosa dopo un altra, Signore. One thing after another, Sir."

In writing this Journal, I shall not tire my readers with relating the occurrences of each particular day. It will be much more agreeable to them, to have a free and continued account of what I saw or heard, most worthy of observation.

For some time, I had very curious travelling, mostly on foot, and attended by a couple of stout women, who carried my baggage upon their heads. Every time that I prepared to set out from a village, I could not help laughing, to see the good people eager to have my equipage in order, and roaring out, "Le Donne, Le Donne. The Women, The Women."

I had full leisure and the best opportunities to observe every thing, in my progress through the island. I was lodged sometimes in private houses, sometimes in convents, being always well recommended from place to place. The first convent in which I lay, was at Canari. It appeared a little odd at first. But I soon learnt to repair to my dormitory as naturally as if I had been a friar for seven years.

The convents were small decent buildings, suited to the sober ideas of their pious inhabitants. The religious who devoutly endeavour to "walk with GOD," are often treated with raillery by those whom pleasure or business prevents from thinking of future and more exalted objects. A little experience of the serenity and peace of mind to

bé found in convents, would be of use to temper the fire of men of the world.

At Patrimonio I found the seat of a provincial magistracy. The chief judge was there, and entertained me very well. Upon my arrival, the captain of the guard came out, and demanded who I was? I replied "Inglese English." He looked at me seriously, and then said in a tone between regret and upbraiding, "Inglese, c'erano i nostri amici; ma non le sono più. The English. They were once our friends; but they are so no more." I felt for my country, and was abashed before this honest soldier.

At Oletta I visited Count Nicholas Rivarola, brother to my friend at Leghorn. He received me with great kindness, and did every thing in his power to make me easy. I found here a Corsican who thought better of the British than the captain of the guard at Patrimonio. He talked of our bombarding San Fiorenzo,* in favour of the patriots, and willingly gave me his horse for the afternoon, which he said he would not have done to a man of any other nation.

When I came to Morato, I had the pleasure of being made acquainted with Signor Barbaggi, who is married to the niece of Paoli. I found him to be a sensible, intelligent, well-bred man. The mint of Corsica was in his house. I got specimens of their different kinds of money in silver and copper, and was told that they hoped in a year or two, to strike some gold coins. Signor Barbaggi's house was repairing, so I was lodged in the convent. But in the morning returned to breakfast, and had choco-

* In 1745. See Introduction. Page 110.—ED.

late; and at dinner we had no less than twelve well-drest dishes, served on Dresden china, with a desert, different sorts of wine and a liqueur, all the produce of Corsica. Signor Barbaggi was frequently repeating to me, that the Corsicans inhabited a rude uncultivated country, and that they lived like Spartans. I begged leave to ask him in what country he could show me greater luxury than I had seen in his house; and I said I should certainly tell wherever I went, what tables the Corsicans kept, notwithstanding their pretensions to poverty and temperance. A good deal of pleasantry passed upon this. His lady was a genteel woman, and appeared to be agreeable, though very reserved.

From Morato to Corte, I travelled through a wild mountainous rocky country, diversified with some large valleys. I got little beasts for me and my servant, sometimes horses, but oftener mules or asses. We had no bridles, but cords fixed round their necks, with which we managed them as well as we could.

At Corte I waited upon the supreme council, to one of whom, Signor Boccociampe, I had a letter from Signor Barbaggi. I was very politely received, and was conducted to the Franciscan convent, where I got the apartment of Paoli, who was then some days' journey beyond the mountains, holding a court of syndicato * at a village called Sollacarò.

* "The Syndicatori make a tour through the different provinces, as our judges in Britain go the circuits. They hear complaints against the different magistrates."—Boswell's "Account of Corsica," p. 153.—ED.

As the General resided for some time in this convent, the fathers made a better appearance than any I saw in the island. I was principally attended by the Priour, a resolute divine, who had formerly been in the army, and by Padre Giulio, a man of much address, who still favours me with his correspondence.

These fathers have a good vineyard and an excellent garden. They have between 30 and 40 bee-hives in long wooden cases or trunks of trees, with a covering of the bark of the cork tree. When they want honey, they burn a little juniper wood, the smoak of which makes the bees retire. They then take an iron instrument with a sharp-edged crook at one end of it, and bring out the greatest part of the honey-comb, leaving only a little for the bees, who work the case full again. By taking the honey in this way, they never kill a bee. They seemed much at their ease, living in peace and plenty. I often joked them with the text which is applied to their order, "Nihil habentes et omnia possidentes. Having nothing, and yet possessing all things."

I went to the choir with them. The service was conducted with propriety, and Padre Giulio played on the organ. On the great altar of their church is a tabernacle carved in wood by a Religious. It is a piece of exquisite workmanship. A Genoese gentleman offered to give them one in silver for it; but they would not make the exchange.

These fathers have no library worth mentioning; but their convent is large and well built. I looked about with great attention, to see if I could find any inscrip-

tions; but the only one I found was upon a certain useful edifice.

"Sine necessitate huc non intrate,
Quia necessaria sumus."

A studied, rhiming, Latin conceit marked upon such a place was truly ludicrous.

I chose to stop a while at Corte, to repose myself after my fatigues, and to see every thing about the capital of Corsica.

The morning after my arrival here, three French deserters desired to speak with me. The foolish fellows had taken it into their heads, that I was come to raise recruits for Scotland, and so they begged to have the honour of going along with me; I suppose with intention to have the honour of running off from me, as they had done from their own regiments.

I received many civilities at Corte from Signor Boccociampe, and from Signor Massesi the Great Chancellor, whose son Signor Luigi a young gentleman of much vivacity, and natural politeness, was so good as to attend me constantly as my conductour. I used to call him my governour. I liked him much, for as he had never been out of the island, his ideas were entirely Corsican.

Such of the members of the supreme council as were in residence during my stay at Corte, I found to be solid and sagacious, men of penetration and ability, well calculated to assist the General in forming his political plans, and in turning to the best advantage, the violence and enterprise of the people.

The university was not then sitting, so I could only see the rooms, which were shewn me by the Abbé Valentini, procuratour of the university. The professours were all absent except one Capuchin father whom I visited at his convent. It is a tolerable building, with a pretty large collection of books. There is in the church here a tabernacle carved in wood, in the manner of that at the Franciscans', but much inferiour to it.

I went up to the castle of Corte. The commandant very civilly shewed me every part of it. As I wished to see all things in Corsica, I desired to see even the unhappy criminals.* There were then three in the castle, a man for the murder of his wife, a married lady who had hired one of her servants to strangle a woman of whom she was jealous, and the servant who had actually perpetrated this barbarous action. They were brought out from their cells, that I might talk with them. The murderer of his wife had a stupid hardened appearance, and told me he did it at the instigation of the devil. The servant was a poor despicable wretch. He had at first accused his mistress, but was afterwards prevailed with to deny his accusation, upon which he was put to the

* Boswell was too fond of seeing criminals and hangmen. He was frequently present at executions. In his "Life of Johnson" he records, under date of June 23rd, 1784, "I visited Johnson in the morning, after having been present at the shocking sight of fifteen men executed before Newgate." He once persuaded Sir Joshua Reynolds to accompany him, and they recognised among the sufferers a former servant of Mrs. Thrale's. He describes Mr. Akerman, the Keeper of Newgate, as his esteemed friend. According to Mr. Croker, he defended his taste in a paper he wrote for the "London Magazine," "as a natural and irresistible impulse."—ED.

torture,* by having lighted matches held between his fingers. This made him return to what he had formerly said, so as to be a strong evidence against his mistress. His hands were so miserably scorched, that he was a piteous object. I asked him why he had committed such a crime, he said, "Perche era senza spirito. Because I was without understanding." The lady seemed of a bold and resolute spirit. She spoke to me with great firmness, and denied her guilt, saying with a contemptuous smile, as she pointed to her servant, "They can force that creature to say what they please."

The hangman of Corsica was a great curiosity. Being held in the utmost detestation, he durst not live like another inhabitant of the island. He was obliged to take refuge in the castle, and there he was kept in a little corner turret, where he had just room for a miserable bed, and a little bit of fire to dress such victuals for himself as were sufficient to keep him alive, for nobody would have any intercourse with him, but all turned their backs upon him. I went up and looked at him. And a more dirty rueful spectacle I never beheld. He seemed sensible of his situation, and held down his head like an abhorred outcast.

It was a long time before they could get a hangman in Corsica, so that the punishment of the gallows was

* So far as I have been able to ascertain, this passage, this great blot on Paoli and the Corsican patriots, excited no attention in England. But the Inquisition was still at its hateful work in many countries, and men's minds were used to cruelties. Torture was still employed in capital cases to force confession even in Holland and France.—ED.

hardly known, all their criminals being shot.* At last this creature whom I saw, who is a Sicilian, came with a message to Paoli. The General who has a wonderful talent for physiognomy, on seeing the man, said immediately to some of the people about him, "Ecco il boia. Behold our hangman." He gave orders to ask the man if he would accept of the office, and his answer was, "My grandfather was a hangman, my father was a hangman. I have been a hangman myself, and am willing to continue so." He was therefore immediately put into office, and the ignominious death dispensed by his hands, had more effect than twenty executions by fire arms.

It is remarkable that no Corsican would upon any account consent to be hangman. Not the greatest criminals, who might have had their lives upon that condition. Even the wretch, who for a paultry hire, had strangled a woman, would rather submit to death, than do the same action, as the executioner of the law.†

When I had seen every thing about Corte, I prepared for my journey over the mountains, that I might be with Paoli. The night before I set out, I recollected that I had forgotten to get a passport, which, in the present situation of Corsica, is still a necessary precaution. After supper therefore the Priour walked with me to Corte, to the house of the Great Chancellor, who ordered the passport to be made out immediately, and while his

* "Their dignities, and a' that," are, it seems, to be found even among executioners. The man who shoots scorns the man who hangs. It would be an interesting inquiry how the headsman ranks.—ED.

† See, however, page 201.—ED.

secretary was writing it, entertained me by reading to me some of the minutes of the general consulta. When the passport was finished, and ready to have the seal put to it, I was much pleased with a beautiful, simple incident. The Chancellor desired a little boy who was playing in the room by us, to run to his mother, and bring the great seal of the kingdom. I thought myself sitting in the house of a Cincinnatus.

Next morning I set out in very good order, having excellent mules, and active clever Corsican guides. The worthy fathers of the convent who treated me in the kindest manner while I was their guest, would also give me some provisions for my journey; so they put up a gourd of their best wine, and some delicious pomegranates. My Corsican guides appeared so hearty, that I often got down and walked along with them, doing just what I saw them do. When we grew hungry, we threw stones among the thick branches of the chestnut trees which overshadowed us, and in that manner we brought down a shower of chestnuts with which we filled our pockets, and went on eating them with great relish; and when this made us thirsty, we lay down by the side of the first brook, put our mouths to the stream, and drank sufficiently. It was just being for a little while, one of the "prisca gens mortalium, the primitive race of men," who ran about in the woods eating acorns and drinking water.

While I stopped to refresh my mules at a little village, the inhabitants came crouding about me as an ambassadour going to their General. When they were informed of my country, a strong black fellow among them said,

"Inglese! sono barbari; non credono in Dio grande. English! they are barbarians; they don't believe in the great God." I told him, "Excuse me Sir. We do believe in God, and in Jesus Christ too." "Um." said he, "e nel Papa? and in the Pope?" "No." "E perche? And why?" This was a puzzling question in these circumstances; for there was a great audience to the controversy. I thought I would try a method of my own, and very gravely replied, "Perche siamo troppo lontani. Because we are too far off."* A very new argument against the universal infallibility of the Pope. It took however; for my opponent mused a while, and then said, "Troppo lontano! La Sicilia è tanto lontana che l'Inghilterra; e in Sicilia si credono nel Papa. Too far off! Why Sicily is as far off as England. Yet in Sicily they believe in the Pope." "O," said I "noi siamo dieci volte più lontani che la Sicilia! We are ten times farther off than Sicily." "Aha!" said he; and seemed quite satisfied. In this manner I got off very well. I question much whether any of the learned reasonings of our protestant divines would have had so good an effect.

My journey over the mountains was very entertaining. I past some immense ridges and vast woods. I was in great health and spirits, and fully able to enter into the ideas of the brave rude men whom I found in all quarters.

At Bastelica where there is a stately spirited race of people, I had a large company to attend me in the con-

* According to Macaulay ("Essays," vol. i., p. 378), "wit was utterly wanting to Boswell."—Ed.

vent. I liked to see their natural frankness and ease;* for why should men be afraid of their own species? They just came in making an easy bow, placed themselves round the room where I was sitting, rested themselves on their muskets, and immediately entered into conversation with me. They talked very feelingly of the miseries that their country had endured, and complained that they were still but in a state of poverty. I happened at that time to have an unusual flow of spirits; and as one who finds himself amongst utter strangers in a distant country has no timidity, I harangued the men of Bastelica with great fluency. I expatiated on the bravery of the Corsicans, by which they had purchased liberty, the most valuable of all possessions, and rendered themselves glorious over all Europe. Their poverty, I told them, might be remedied by a proper cultivation of their island, and by engaging a little in commerce. But I bid them remember, that they were much happier in their present state than in a state of refinement and vice, and that therefore they should beware of luxury. †

What I said had the good fortune to touch them, and several of them repeated the same sentiments much better than I could do. They all expressed their strong attachment to Paoli, and called out in one voice that they

* "For my part I like very well to hear honest Goldsmith talk away carelessly." Boswell, as reported by himself. "Life of Johnson." Date of April 11, 1772.—ED.

† "I give admirable dinners, and good claret; and the moment I go abroad again, I set up my chariot."—Boswell, in a letter to Temple, May 14, 1768.—ED.

were all at his command. I could with pleasure have passed a long time here.

At Ornano I saw the ruins of the seat where the great Sampiero * had his residence. They were a droll enough society of monks in the convent at Ornano. When I told them that I was an Englishman, "Aye, aye," said one of them, "as was well observed by a reverend bishop, when talking of your pretended reformation, 'Angli olim angeli nunc diaboli. The English, formerly angels now devils.'" I looked upon this as an honest effusion of spiritual zeal. The Fathers took good care of me in temporals.

When I at last came within sight of Sollacarò, where Paoli was, I could not help being under considerable anxiety. My ideas of him had been greatly heightened by the conversations I had held with all sorts of people in the island, they having represented him to me as something above humanity. I had the strongest desire to see so exalted a character; but I feared that I should be unable to give a proper account why I had presumed to trouble him with a visit, and that I should sink to nothing before him. I almost wished yet to go back without seeing him.† These workings of sensibility employed my mind till I rode through the village and came up to the house where he was lodged.

Leaving my servant with my guides, I past through the guards, and was met by some of the General's people,

* Sampiero had been the leader of a revolt which broke out in 1564. He was assassinated three years later.—ED.

† Compare Boswell's introduction to Johnson.—ED.

who conducted me into an antichamber, where were several gentlemen in waiting. Signor Boccociampe had notified my arrival, and I was shewn into Paoli's room. I found him alone, and was struck with his appearance. He is tall, strong, and well made; of a fair complexion, a sensible, free, and open countenance, and a manly and noble carriage. He was then in his fortieth year. He was drest in green and gold. He used to wear the common Corsican habit, but on the arrival of the French he thought a little external elegance might be of use to make the government appear in a more respectable light.

He asked me what were my commands for him. I presented him a letter from Count Rivarola, and when he had read it, I shewed him my letter from Rousseau. He was polite, but very reserved. I had stood in the presence of many a prince, but I never had such a trial as in the presence of Paoli. I have already said that he is a great physiognomist. In consequence of his being in continual danger from treachery and assassination, he has formed a habit of studiously observing every new face. For ten minutes we walked backwards and forwards through the room, hardly saying a word, while he looked at me, with a steadfast, keen and penetrating eye, as if he searched my very soul.

This interview was for a while very severe upon me. I was much relieved when his reserve wore off, and he began to speak more. I then ventured to address him with this compliment to the Corsicans. "Sir, I am upon my travels, and have lately visited Rome. I am come

from seeing the ruins of one brave and free people; I now see the rise of another."

He received my compliment very graciously; but observed that the Corsicans had no chance of being like the Romans, a great conquering nation, who should extend its empire over half the globe. Their situation, and the modern political systems, rendered this impossible. "But," said he, "Corsica may be a very happy country."

He expressed a high admiration of M. Rousseau, whom Signor Buttafoco had invited to Corsica, to aid the nation in forming its laws.

It seems M. de Voltaire had reported, in his rallying manner, that the invitation was merely a trick which he had put upon Rousseau. Paoli told me that when he understood this, he himself wrote to Rousseau, enforcing the invitation. Of this affair I shall give a full account in an after part of my Journal.*

Some of the nobles who attended him came into the room, and in a little we were told that dinner was served up. The General did me the honour to place me next him. He had a table of fifteen or sixteen covers, having always a good many of the principal men of the island with him. He had an Italian cook who had been long in France; but he chose to have a few plain substantial dishes, avoiding every kind of luxury, and drinking no foreign wine.

I felt myself under some constraint in such a circle of heroes. The General talked a great deal on history and on literature. I soon perceived that he was a fine

* See page 222.—ED.

classical scholar, that his mind was enriched with a variety of knowledge, and that his conversation at meals was instructive and entertaining. Before dinner he had spoken French. He now spoke Italian, in which he is very eloquent.

We retired to another room to drink coffee. My timidity wore off. I no longer anxiously thought of myself; my whole attention was employed in listening to the illustrious commander of a nation.

He recommended me to the care of the Abbé Rostini, who had lived many years in France. Signor Colonna, the lord of the manor here being from home, his house was assigned for me to live in. I was left by myself till near supper time, when I returned to the General, whose conversation improved upon me, as did the society of those about him, with whom I gradually formed an acquaintance.

Every day I felt myself happier. Particular marks of attention were shewn me as a subject of Great Britain, the report of which went over to Italy, and confirmed the conjectures that I was really an envoy. In the morning I had my chocolate served up upon a silver salver adorned with the arms of Corsica. I dined and supped constantly with the General. I was visited by all the nobility, and whenever I chose to make a little tour, I was attended by a party of guards. I begged of the General not to treat me with so much ceremony; but he insisted upon it.

One day when I rode out I was mounted on Paoli's own horse, with rich furniture of crimson velvet, with

broad gold lace, and had my guards marching along with me.* I allowed myself to indulge a momentary pride in this parade, as I was curious to experience what could really be the pleasure of state and distinction with which mankind are so strangely intoxicated.

When I returned to the continent after all this greatness, I used to joke with my acquaintance, and tell them that I could not bear to live with them, for they did not treat me with a proper respect.

My time passed here in the most agreeable manner. I enjoyed a sort of luxury of noble sentiment. Paoli became more affable with me. I made myself known to him.† I forgot the great distance between us, and had every day some hours of private conversation with him.

From my first setting out on this tour, I wrote down every night what I had observed during the day, throwing together a great deal, that I might afterwards make a selection at leisure.

Of these particulars, the most valuable to my readers,

* "Then took Haman the apparel and the horse, and arrayed Mordecai, and brought him on horseback through the street of the city, and proclaimed before him, 'Thus shall it be done unto the man whom the king delighteth to honour.'"—Book of Esther, c. vi., v. 11.—ED.

† "Finding him (Johnson) in a placid humour, and wishing to avail myself of the opportunity which I fortunately had of consulting a sage, to hear whose wisdom, I conceived, in the ardour of youthful imagination, that men filled with a noble enthusiasm for intellectual improvement would gladly have resorted from distant lands, I opened my mind to him ingenuously, and gave him a little sketch of my life, to which he was pleased to listen with great attention."—Boswell's "Johnson." Date of June 13, 1763.—ED.

as well as to myself, must surely be the memoirs and remarkable sayings of Paoli, which I am proud to record.

Talking of the Corsican war, "Sir," said he, "if the event prove happy, we shall be called great defenders of liberty. If the event shall prove unhappy, we shall be called unfortunate rebels."

The French objected to him that the Corsican nation had no regular troops. "We would not have them," said Paoli. "We should then have the bravery of this and the other regiment. At present every single man is as a regiment himself. Should the Corsicans be formed into regular troops, we should lose that personal bravery which has produced such actions among us, as in another country would have rendered famous even a Marischal.*

I asked him how he could possibly have a soul so superiour to interest. "It is not superiour," said he; "my interest is to gain a name. I know well that he who does good to his country will gain that: and I expect it. Yet could I render this people happy, I would be content to be forgotten. I have an unspeakable pride. 'Una superbia indicibile.' The approbation of my own heart is enough."

He said he would have great pleasure in seeing the world, and enjoying the society of the learned, and the accomplished in every country. I asked him how with these dispositions he could bear to be confined to an island yet in a rude uncivilised state; and instead of participating Attick evenings, "noctes coenaeque Deûm," be

* See page 140.—ED.

in a continual course of care and of danger. He replied in one line of Virgil,

"Vincet amor patriae laudumque immensa cupido."

This uttered with the fine open Italian pronunciation, and the graceful dignity of his manner, was very noble. I wished to have a statue of him taken at that moment.

I asked him if he understood English. He immediately began and spoke it, which he did tolerably well. When at Naples he had known several Irish gentlemen who were officers in that service. Having a great facility in acquiring languages, he learnt English from them. But as he had been now ten years without ever speaking it, he spoke very slow. One could see that he was possessed of the words, but for want of what I may call mechanical practice, he had a difficulty in expressing himself.

I was diverted with his English library. It consisted of—

Some broken volumes of the "Spectatour" and "Tatler."

Pope's "Essay on Man."

"Gulliver's Travels."

A "History of France," in old English. And

"Barclay's Apology for the Quakers."

I promised to send him some English books.*

He convinced me how well he understood our language;

* I have sent him the works of Harrington, of Sidney, of Addison, of Trenchard, of Gordon, and of other writers in favour of liberty. I have also sent him some of our best books of morality and entertainment, in particular the works of Mr. Samuel Johnson, with a

for I took the liberty to shew him a Memorial which I had drawn up on the advantages to Great Britain from an alliance with Corsica, and he translated this memorial into Italian with the greatest facility. He has since given me more proofs of his knowledge of our tongue by his answers to the letters which I have had the honour to write to him in English, and in particular by a very judicious and ingenious criticism on some of Swift's works.

He was well acquainted with the history of Britain. He had read many of the parliamentary debates, and had even seen a number of the "North Briton."† He shewed a considerable knowledge of this country, and often introduced anecdotes and drew comparisons and allusions from Britain.

compleat set of the "Spectatour," "Tatler," and "Guardian;" and to the University of Corte, I have sent a few of the Greek and Roman Classicks, of the beautiful editions of the Messieurs Foulis at Glasgow.*

* The fate of one of these books was curious. Dr. Moore (the author of "Edward," and the father of Sir John Moore) visited Berne somewhere about the year 1772 (he gives no dates). He went to examine the public library of that town. "I happened," he says, "to open the Glasgow edition of Homer, which I saw here; on a blank page of which was an address in Latin to the Corsican General, Paoli, signed James Boswell. This very elegant book had been sent, I suppose, as a present from Mr. Boswell to his friend, the General; and, when that unfortunate chief was obliged to abandon his country, fell, with other of his effects, into the hands of the Swiss officer in the French service, who made a present of the Homer to this library."—"A View of Society and Manners in France," &c., by John Moore, M.D., vol. i., p. 307.—ED.

† John Wilkes began the publication of the "North Briton" in June, 1762.—ED.

He said his great object was to form the Corsicans in such a manner that they might have a firm constitution, and might be able to subsist without him. "Our state," said he, "is young, and still requires the leading strings. I am desirous that the Corsicans should be taught to walk of themselves. Therefore when they come to me to ask whom they should chuse for their Padre del Commune, or other Magistrate, I tell them, 'You know better than I do the able and honest men among your neighbours. Consider the consequence of your choice, not only to yourselves in particular, but to the island in general.' In this manner I accustom them to feel their own importance as members of the state."

After representing the severe and melancholy state of oppression under which Corsica had so long groaned, he said, "We are now to our country like the prophet Elishah stretched over the dead child of the Shunamite, eye to eye, nose to nose, mouth to mouth. It begins to recover warmth, and to revive. I hope it shall yet regain full health and vigour."

I said that things would make a rapid progress, and that we should soon see all the arts and sciences flourish in Corsica. "Patience, Sir," said he. "If you saw a man who had fought a hard battle, who was much wounded, who was beaten to the ground, and who with difficulty could lift himself up, it would not be reasonable to ask him to get his hair well drest, and to put on embroidered clothes. Corsica has fought a hard battle, has been much wounded, has been beaten to the ground, and

with difficulty can lift herself up. The arts and sciences are like dress and ornament. You cannot expect them from us for some time. But come back twenty or thirty years hence, and we'll shew you arts and sciences, and concerts and assemblies, and fine ladies, and we'll make you fall in love among us, Sir."

He smiled a good deal, when I told him that I was much surprised to find him so amiable, accomplished, and polite; for although I knew I was to see a great man, I expected to find a rude character, an Attila king of the Goths, or a Luitprand,* king of the Lombards.

I observed that although he had often a placid smile upon his countenance, he hardly ever laughed. Whether loud laughter in general society be a sign of weakness or rusticity, I cannot say; but I have remarked that real great men, and men of finished behaviour, seldom fall into it.

The variety, and I may say versatility, of the mind of this great man is amazing. One day when I came in to pay my respects to him before dinner, I found him in much agitation, with a circle of his nobles around him, and a Corsican standing before him like a criminal before his judge. Paoli immediately turned to me, "I am glad you are come, Sir. You protestants talk much against our doctrine of transubstantiation. Behold here the miracle of transubstantiation, a Corsican transubstantiated into a Genoese. That unworthy man who now stands before

* Liutprand. See Gibbon's "Decline and Fall," chap. xlix.—ED.

me is a Corsican, who has been long a lieutenant under the Genoese, in Capo Corso. Andrew Doria and all their greatest heroes could not be more violent for the republick than he has been, and all against his country." Then turning to the man, "Sir," said he, "Corsica makes it a rule to pardon the most unworthy of her children, when they surrender themselves, even when they are forced to do so, as is your case. You have now escaped. But take care. I shall have a strict eye upon you; and if ever you make the least attempt to return to your traiterous practices, you know I can be avenged of you." He spoke this with the fierceness of a lion, and from the awful darkness of his brow, one could see that his thoughts of vengeance were terrible. Yet when it was over, he all at once resumed his usual appearance, called out "andiamo, come along;" went to dinner, and was as chearful and gay as if nothing had happened.

His notions of morality are high and refined, such as become the Father of a nation. Were he a libertine, his influence would soon vanish; for men will never trust the important concerns of society to one they know will do what is hurtful to society for his own pleasures. He told me that his father had brought him up with great strictness, and that he had very seldom deviated from the paths of virtue. That this was not from a defect of feeling and passion, but that his mind being filled with important objects, his passions were employed in more noble pursuits than those of licentious pleasure. I saw from Paoli's example the great art of preserving young men of spirit from the contagion of vice, in which there

is often a species of sentiment, ingenuity and enterprise nearly allied to virtuous qualities.

Shew a young man that there is more real spirit in virtue than in vice, and you have a surer hold of him, during his years of impetuosity and passion, than by convincing his judgement of all the rectitude of ethicks.

One day at dinner, he gave us the principal arguments for the being and attributes of GOD. To hear these arguments repeated with graceful energy by the illustrious Paoli in the midst of his heroick nobles, was admirable. I never felt my mind more elevated.

I took occasion to mention the king of Prussia's infidel writings, and in particular his epistle to Marischal Keith.* Paoli, who often talks with admiration of the greatness of that monarch, instead of uttering any direct censure of what he saw to be wrong in so distinguished a hero, paused a little, and then said with a grave and most expressive look, "C'est une belle consolation pour un vieux general mourant, 'En peu de tems vous ne serez plus.' It is fine consolation for an old general when dying, 'In a little while you shall be no more.'"

He observed that the Epicurean philosophy had produced but one exalted character, whereas Stoicism had

* The younger brother of the Earl Marischal (see p. 140). He took part in the rebellion of 1715, although he was but seventeen years old. He next served for ten years in the Irish Brigade in the Spanish army. He then entered the Russian service, and fought against the Turks. He was sent to England as Russian ambassador. When he came to Court he was required to speak by an interpreter when he had an audience of the king, and to appear in Russian dress. He next entered the Prussian service as Field-Marshal. He was killed in the battle of Hochkirchen, in 1758.—ED.

been the seminary of great men. What he now said put me in mind of these noble lines of Lucan.

> Hi mores, haec duri immota Catonis
> Secta fuit, servare modum finemque tenere,
> Naturamque sequi, patriaeque impendere vitam,
> Nec sibi sed toti genitum se credere mundo.
>
> LUCAN. Pharsal. lib. ii. l. 380.

> These were the stricter manners of the man,
> And this the stubborn course in which they ran;
> The golden mean unchanging to pursue,
> Constant to keep the purpos'd end in view;
> Religiously to follow nature's laws,
> And die with pleasure in his country's cause.
> To think he was not for himself design'd,
> But born to be of use to all mankind.
>
> —ROWE.

When he was asked if he would quit the island of which he had undertaken the protection, supposing a foreign power should create him a Marischal, and make him governour of a province; he replied, "I hope they will believe I am more honest, or more ambitious; for," said he, "to accept of the highest offices under a foreign power would be to serve."

"To have been a colonel, a general or a marischal," said he, "would have been sufficient for my table, for my taste in dress, for the beauty whom my rank would have entitled me to attend. But it would not have been suffi-

cient for this spirit, for this imagination." Putting his hand upon his bosom.

He reasoned one day in the midst of his nobles whether the commander of a nation should be married or not. "If he is married," said he, "there is a risk that he may be distracted by private affairs, and swayed too much by a concern for his family. If he is unmarried, there is a risk that not having the tender attachments of a wife and children, he may sacrifice all to his own ambition." When I said he ought to marry and have a son to succeed him, "Sir," said he, "what security can I have that my son will think and act as I do? What sort of a son had Cicero, and what had Marcus Aurelius?"

He said to me one day when we were alone, "I never will marry. I have not the conjugal virtues. Nothing would tempt me to marry, but a woman who should bring me an immense dowry, with which I might assist my country."

But he spoke much in praise of marriage, as an institution which the experience of ages had found to be the best calculated for the happiness of individuals, and for the good of society. Had he been a private gentleman, he probably would have married, and I am sure would have made as good a husband and father as he does a supreme magistrate and a general. But his arduous and critical situation would not allow him to enjoy domestick felicity. He is wedded to his country, and the Corsicans are his children.

He often talked to me of marriage, told me licentious

pleasures were delusive and transient, that I should never be truly happy till I was married, and that he hoped to have a letter from me soon after my return home, acquainting him that I had followed his advice, and was convinced from experience that he was in the right. With such an engaging condescension did this great man behave to me. If I could but paint his manner, all my readers would be charmed with him.

He has a mind fitted for philosophical speculations as well as for affairs of state. One evening at supper, he entertained us for some time with some curious reveries and conjectures as to the nature of the intelligence of beasts, with regard to which, he observed human knowledge was as yet very imperfect. He in particular seemed fond of inquiring into the language of the brute creation. He observed that beasts fully communicate their ideas to each other, and that some of them, such as dogs, can form several articulate sounds. In different ages there have been people who pretended to understand the language of birds and beasts. Perhaps, said Paoli, in a thousand years we may know this as well as we know things which appeared much more difficult to be known. I have often since this conversation indulged myself in such reveries. If it were not liable to ridicule, I would say that an acquaintance with the language of beasts would be a most agreeable acquisition to man, as it would enlarge the circle of his social intercourse.

On my return to Britain I was disappointed to find

nothing upon this subject in Doctour Gregory's* Comparative View of the State and Faculties of Man with those of the Animal World, which was then just published. My disappointment however was in a good measure made up by a picture of society, drawn by that ingenious and worthy authour, which may be well applied to the Corsicans. "There is a certain period in the progress of society in which mankind appear to the greatest advantage. In this period, they have the bodily powers, and all the animal functions remaining in full vigour. They are bold, active, steady, ardent in the love of liberty and their native country. Their manners are simple, their social affections warm, and though they are greatly influenced by the ties of blood, yet they are generous and hospitable to strangers. Religion is universally regarded among them, though disguised by a variety of superstitions."†

Paoli was very desirous that I should study the character of the Corsicans. "Go among them," said he, "the more you talk with them, you will do me the greater pleasure. Forget the meanness of their apparel. Hear their sentiments. You will find honour, and sense, and abilities among these poor men."

His heart grew big when he spoke of his countrymen. His own great qualities appeared to unusual advantage,

* John Gregory, M.D., born 1724, Professor of the Practice of Physic in Edinburgh. "It is stated that no less than sixteen members of this family have held British Professorships, chiefly in the Scotch Universities."—Chalmers' "Biog. Dict.," p. 289.—ED.

† Preface to "Comparative View," p. 8.

while he described the virtues of those for whose happiness his whole life was employed. "If," said he, "I should lead into the field an army of Corsicans against an army double their number, let me speak a few words to the Corsicans, to remind them of the honour of their country and of their brave forefathers, I do not say that they would conquer, but I am sure that not a man of them would give way. The Corsicans," said he, "have a steady resolution that would amaze you. I wish you could see one of them die. It is a proverb among the Genoese, 'I Corsi meritano la furca e la sanno soffrire. The Corsicans deserve the gallows, and they fear not to meet it.' There is a real compliment to us in this saying."

He told me, that in Corsica, "criminals are put to death four and twenty hours after sentence is pronounced against them. This," said he, "may not be over catholick, but it is humane."

He went on, and gave me several instances of the Corsican spirit.

"A sergeant," said he, "who fell in one of our desperate actions, when just a dying, wrote to me thus. 'I salute you. Take care of my aged father. In two hours I shall be with the rest who have bravely died for their country.'"

A Corsican gentleman who had been taken prisoner by the Genoese, was thrown into a dark dungeon, where he was chained to the ground. While he was in this dismal situation, the Genoese sent a message to him, that if he would accept of a commission in their service, he might have it. "No," said he. "Were I to accept

of your offer, it would be with a determined purpose to take the first opportunity of returning to the service of my country. But I will not accept of it. For I would not have my countrymen even suspect that I could be one moment unfaithful." And he remained in his dungeon. Paoli went on: "I defy Rome, Sparta or Thebes to shew me thirty years of such patriotism as Corsica can boast. Though the affection between relations is exceedingly strong in the Corsicans, they will give up their nearest relations for the good of their country, and sacrifice such as have deserted to the Genoese."

He gave me a noble instance of a Corsican's feeling and greatness of mind. "A criminal," said he, "was condemned to die. His nephew came to me with a lady of distinction, that she might solicit his pardon. The nephew's anxiety made him think that the lady did not speak with sufficient force and earnestness. He therefore advanced, and addressed himself to me, 'Sir, is it proper for me to speak?' as if he felt that it was unlawful to make such an application. I bid him go on. 'Sir,' said he, with the deepest concern, 'may I beg the life of my uncle? If it is granted, his relations will make a gift to the state of a thousand zechins. We will furnish fifty soldiers in pay during the siege of Furiani. We will agree that my uncle shall be banished, and will engage that he shall never return to the island.' I knew the nephew to be a man of worth, and I answered him: 'You are acquainted with the circumstances of this case. Such is my confidence in you, that if you will

say that giving your uncle a pardon would be just, useful or honourable for Corsica, I promise you it shall be granted.' He turned about, burst into tears, and left me, saying, 'Non vorrei vendere l'onore della patria per mille zechini. I would not have the honour of our country sold for a thousand zechins.' And his uncle suffered."

Although the General was one of the constituent members of the court of syndicato,* he seldom took his chair. He remained in his own apartment; and if any of those whose suits were determined by the syndicato were not pleased with the sentence, they had an audience of Paoli, who never failed to convince them that justice had been done them. This appeared to me a necessary indulgence in the infancy of government. The Corsicans having been so long in a state of anarchy, could not all at once submit their minds to the regular authority of justice. They would submit implicitly to Paoli, because they love and venerate him. But such a submission is in reality being governed by their passions. They submit to one for whom they have a personal regard. They cannot be said to be perfectly civilized till they submit to the determinations of their magistrates as officers of the state, entrusted with the administration of justice. By convincing them that the magistrates judge with abilities and uprightness, Paoli accustoms the Corsicans to have that salutary confidence in their rulers, which is necessary for securing respect and stability to the government.

* See page 154.—ED.

After having said much in praise of the Corsicans, "Come," said he, "you shall have a proof of what I tell you. There is a crowd in the next room, waiting for admittance to me. I will call in the first I see, and you shall hear him." He who chanced to present himself, was a venerable old man. The General shook him by the hand, and bid him good day, with an easy kindness that gave the aged peasant full encouragement to talk to his Excellency with freedom. Paoli bid him not mind me, but say on. The old man then told him that there had been an unlucky tumult in the village where he lived, and that two of his sons were killed. That looking upon this as a heavy misfortune, but without malice on the part of those who deprived him of his sons, he was willing to have allowed it to pass without enquiry. But his wife anxious for revenge, had made an application to have them apprehended and punished. That he gave his Excellency this trouble to intreat that the greatest care might be taken, lest in the heat of enmity among his neighbours, any body should be punished as guilty of the blood of his sons, who was really innocent of it. There was something so generous in this sentiment, while at the same time the old man seemed full of grief for the loss of his children, that it touched my heart in the most sensible manner. Paoli looked at me with complacency and a kind of amiable triumph on the behaviour of the old man, who had a flow of words and a vivacity of gesture which fully justified what Petrus Cyrnaeus* hath said of the Cor-

* See Preface, page viii.—ED.

sican eloquence; "Diceres omnes esse bonos causidicos. You would say they are all good pleaders."

I found Paoli had reason to wish that I should talk much with his countrymen, as it gave me a higher opinion both of him and of them. Thuanus* has justly said, "Sunt mobilia Corsorum ingenia. The dispositions of the Corsicans are changeable." Yet after ten years, their attachment to Paoli is as strong as at the first. Nay, they have an enthusiastick admiration of him. "Questo grand' uomo mandato per Dio a liberare la patria. This great man whom God hath sent to free our country," was the manner in which they expressed themselves to me concerning him.

Those who attended on Paoli were all men of sense and abilities in their different departments. Some of them had been in foreign service. One of them, Signor Suzzoni, had been long in Germany. He spoke German to me, and recalled to my mind, the happy days which I have past among that plain, honest, brave people, who of all nations in the world, receive strangers with the greatest cordiality.† Signor Gian Quilico Casa Bianca, of the most ancient Corsican nobility, was much my

* Jacques-Auguste de Thou (or, as he called himself in Latin, Jacobus Augustus Thuanus), born in Paris 1553. Author of "Historia sui Temporis," in 138 books.—ED.

† They must have wonderfully improved since the days of Erasmus. "Advenientem nemo salutat, ne videantur ambire hospitem. Ubi diu inclamaveris, tandem aliquis per fenestellam æstuarii (nam in his degunt fere usque ad solstitium æstivum) profert caput, non aliter quam e testa prospicit testudo. Is rogandus est an liceat illic diversari. Si non renuit, intelligis dari locum," &c.—"Erasmi Colloquia. Diversoria."—ED.

friend. He instructed me fully with regard to the Corsican government. He had even the patience to sit by me while I wrote down an account of it, which from conversations with Paoli, I afterwards enlarged and improved. I received many civilities from the Abbé Rostini, a man of literature, and distinguished no less for the excellency of his heart. His saying of Paoli deserves to be remembered. "Nous ne craignons pas que notre General nous trompe ni qu'il se laisse tromper. We are not afraid that our General will deceive us, nor that he will let himself be deceived."

I also received civilities from Father Guelfucci of the order of Servites,* a man whose talents and virtues, united with a singular decency and sweetness of manners, have raised him to the honourable station of secretary to the General. Indeed all the gentlemen here behaved to me in the most obliging manner. We walked, rode, and went a-shooting together.

The peasants and soldiers were all frank, open, lively and bold, with a certain roughness of manner which agrees well with their character, and is far from being displeasing. The General gave me an admirable instance of their plain and natural solid good sense. A young French Marquis, very rich and very vain, came over to Corsica. He had a sovereign contempt for the barbarous inhabitants, and strutted† about (andava

* Servites, or Servants of the Blessed Virgin, a religious order, first instituted in Tuscany in 1233.—ED.

† "You see yon birkie, ca'd a lord,
Wha struts, and stares, and a' that."—Burns.—ED.

a passo misurato) with prodigious airs of consequence. The Corsicans beheld him with a smile of ridicule, and said, "Let him alone, he is young."

The Corsican peasants and soldiers are very fond of baiting cattle with the large mountain dogs. This keeps up a ferocity among them which totally extinguishes fear. I have seen a Corsican in the very heat of a baiting, run in, drive off the dogs, seize the half-frantick animal by the horns, and lead it away. The common people did not seem much given to diversions. I observed some of them in the great hall of the house of Colonna where I was lodged, amusing themselves with playing at a sort of draughts in a very curious manner. They drew upon the floor with chalk, a sufficient number of squares, chalking one all over, and leaving one open, alternately; and instead of black men and white, they had bits of stone and bits of wood. It was an admirable burlesque on gaming.

The chief satisfaction of these islanders when not engaged in war or in hunting, seemed to be that of lying at their ease in the open air, recounting tales of the bravery of their countrymen, and singing songs in honour of the Corsicans, and against the Genoese. Even in the night they will continue this pastime in the open air, unless rain forces them to retire into their houses.

The ambasciadore Inglese, The English ambassadour, as the good peasants and soldiers used to call me, became a great favourite among them. I got a Corsican dress made, in which I walked about with an air of true

satisfaction. The General did me the honour to present me with his own pistols, made in the island, all of Corsican wood and iron, and of excellent workmanship. I had every other accoutrement. I even got one of the shells which had often sounded the alarm to liberty. I preserve them all with great care.

The Corsican peasants and soldiers were quite free and easy with me. Numbers of them used to come and see me of a morning, and just go out and in as they pleased.* I did every thing in my power to make them fond of the British, and bid them hope for an alliance with us. They asked me a thousand questions about my country, all which I chearfully answered as well as I could.

One day they would needs hear me play upon my German flute. To have told my honest natural visitants, Really gentlemen I play very ill, and put on such airs as we do in our genteel companies, would have been highly ridiculous. I therefore immediately complied with their request. I gave them one or two Italian airs, and then some of our beautiful old Scots tunes, Gilderoy, the Lass of Patie's Mill, Corn riggs are Bonny. The pathetick simplicity and pastoral gaiety of the Scots musick, will always please those who have the genuine feelings of nature. The Corsicans were charmed with the specimens I gave them, though I may now say that they were very indifferently performed.

* One is reminded of Gulliver in Lilliput. "I took all possible methods to cultivate this favourable disposition. The natives came, by degrees, to be less apprehensive of any danger from me. I would sometimes lie down, and let five or six of them dance on my hand."—ED.

My good friends insisted also to have an English song from me. I endeavoured to please them in this too, and was very lucky in that which occurred to me. I sung them "Hearts of oak are our ships, Hearts of oak are our men."* I translated it into Italian for them, and never did I see men so delighted with a song as the Corsicans were with Hearts of oak. "Cuore di querco," cried they, "bravo Inglese." It was quite a joyous riot. I fancied myself to be a recruiting sea-officer. I fancied all my chorus of Corsicans aboard the British fleet.

Paoli talked very highly on preserving the independency of Corsica. "We may," said he, "have foreign powers for our friends; but they must be 'Amici fuori di casa. Friends at arm's length.' We may make an alliance, but we will not submit ourselves to the dominion of the greatest nation in Europe. This people who have done so much for liberty, would be hewn in pieces man by man, rather than allow Corsica to be sunk into the territories of another country. Some years ago, when a false rumour was spread that I had a design to yield up Corsica to the Emperour, a Corsican came to me, and addressed me in great agitation. 'What! shall the blood of so many heroes, who have sacrificed their lives for the freedom of Corsica, serve only to tinge the purple of a foreign prince!'"

I mentioned to him the scheme of an alliance between Great Britain and Corsica. Paoli with politeness and dignity waved the subject, by saying, "The less assistance we have from allies, the greater our glory." He seemed

* A song written by Garrick.—ED.

hurt by our treatment of his country. He mentioned the severe proclamation at the last peace, in which the brave islanders were called the Rebels of Corsica. He said with a conscious pride and proper feeling, "Rebels! I did not expect that from Great Britain."

He however showed his great respect for the British nation, and I could see he wished much to be in friendship with us. When I asked him what I could possibly do in return for all his goodness to me. He replied, "Solamente disingannate il suo corte. Only undeceive your court. Tell them what you have seen here. They will be curious to ask you. A man come from Corsica will be like a man come from the Antipodes."

I expressed such hopes as a man of sensibility would in my situation naturally form. He saw at least one Briton devoted to his cause. I threw out many flattering ideas of future political events, imaged the British and the Corsicans strictly united both in commerce and in war, and described the blunt kindness and admiration with which the hearty, generous common people of England would treat the brave Corsicans.

I insensibly got the better of his reserve upon this head. My flow of gay ideas relaxed his severity, and brightened up his humour. "Do you remember," said he, "the little people in Asia who were in danger of being oppressed by the great king of Assyria,* till they addressed themselves to the Romans. And the Romans,

* When Paoli makes the Romans have dealings with the great king of Assyria, we may well say, as Mrs. Shandy said of Socrates, "He had been dead a hundred years ago."—ED.

with the noble spirit of a great and free nation, stood forth, and would not suffer the great king to destroy the little people, but made an alliance with them?"

He made no observations upon this beautiful piece of history. It was easy to see his allusion to his own nation and ours.

When the General related this piece of history to me, I was negligent enough not to ask him what little people he meant. As the story made a strong impression upon me, upon my return to Britain I searched a variety of books to try if I could find it, but in vain. I therefore took the liberty in one of my letters to Paoli, to beg he would let me know it. He told me the little people was the Jews, that the story was related by several ancient authours, but that I would find it told with most precision and energy in the eighth chapter of the first book of the Maccabees.

The first book of the Maccabees, though not received into the Protestant canon, is allowed by all the learned to be an authentick history. I have read Paoli's favourite story with much satisfaction, and, as in several circumstances, it very well applies to Great Britain and Corsica, is told with great eloquence, and furnishes a fine model for an alliance, I shall make no apology for transcribing the most interesting verses.

"Now Judas had heard of the fame of the Romans, that they were mighty and valiant men, and such as would lovingly accept all that joined themselves unto them, and make a league of amity with all that came unto them.

"And that they were men of great valour. It was told

him also of their wars and noble acts which they had done amongst the Galatians, and how they had conquered them, and brought them under tribute.

"And what they had done in the country of Spain, for the winning of the mines of the silver and gold which are there.

"And that by their policy and patience they had conquered all the place, though it were very far from them.

"It was told him besides, how they destroyed and brought under their dominion, all other kingdoms and isles that at any time resisted them.

"But with their friends, and such as relied upon them, they kept amity: and that they had conquered kingdoms both far and near, insomuch as all that heard of their name were afraid of them:

"Also, that whom they would help to a kingdom, those reign; and whom again they would, they displace: finally, that they were greatly exalted:

"Moreover, how they had made for themselves a senate-house, wherein three hundred and twenty men sat in council dayly, consulting alway for the people, to the end that they might be well ordered.

"In consideration of these things Judas chose Eupolemus the son of John the son of Accos, and Jason the son of Eleazar, and sent them to Rome, to make a league of amity and confederacy with them,

"And to entreat them that they would take the yoke from them, for they saw that the kingdom of the Grecians did oppress Israel with servitude.

"They went therefore to Rome, which was a very

great journey, and came into the senate, where they spake, and said,

"Judas Maccabeus, with his brethren, and the people of the Jews, have sent us unto you, to make a confederacy and peace with you, and that we might be registered your confederates and friends.

"So that matter pleased the Romans well.

"And this is the copy of the epistle which the senate wrote back again, in tables of brass, and sent to Jerusalem, that there they might have by them a memorial of peace and confederacy.

"Good success be to the Romans, and to the people of the Jews, by sea and by land for ever. The sword also, and enemy be far from them.

"If there come first any war upon the Romans, or any of their confederates, throughout all their dominions.

"The people of the Jews shall help them, as the time shall be appointed, with all their heart.

"Neither shall they give any thing unto them that make war upon them, or aid them with victuals, weapons, money or ships, as it hath seemed good unto the Romans, but they shall keep their covenant, without taking anything therefore.

"In the same manner also, if war come first upon the nation of the Jews, the Romans shall help them with all their heart, according as the time shall be appointed them.

"Neither shall victuals be given to them that take part against them, or weapons, or money, or ships, as it hath seemed good to the Romans; but they shall keep their covenants, and that without deceit.

"According to these articles did the Romans make a covenant with the people of the Jews.

"Howbeit, if hereafter the one party or the other, shall think meet to add or diminish any thing they may do it at their pleasures, and whatsoever they shall add or take away, shall be ratified.

"And, as touching the evils that Demetrius doth to the Jews, we have written unto him, saying, Wherefore hast thou made thy yoke heavy upon our friends and confederates the Jews?

"If therefore they complain any more against thee, we will do them justice, and fight with thee by sea and by land."

I will venture to ask whether the Romans appear, in any one instance of their history, more truly great than they do here.

Paoli said, "If a man would preserve the generous glow of patriotism, he must not reason too much. Mareschal Saxe reasoned; and carried the arms of France into the heart of Germany, his own country. * I act from sentiment, not from reasonings."

"Virtuous sentiments and habits," said he, "are beyond philosophical reasonings, which are not so strong, and are continually varying. If all the professours in Europe were formed into one society, it would no doubt be a society very respectable, and we should there be entertained with the best moral lessons. Yet I believe I should find more real virtue in a society of good peasants

* "Ce fier Saxon, qu'on croit né parmi nous."
—Voltaire, "Poëme de Fontenoi."—ED.

in some little village in the heart of your island. It might be said of these two societies, as was said of Demosthenes and Themistocles, 'Illius dicta, hujus facta magis valebant. The one was powerful in words, but the other in deeds.'"

This kind of conversation led me to tell him how much I had suffered from anxious speculations. With a mind naturally inclined to melancholy, and a keen desire of inquiry, I had intensely applied myself to metaphysical researches, and reasoned beyond my depth, on such subjects as it is not given to man to know. I told him I had rendered my mind a camera obscura, that in the very heat of youth I felt the "non est tanti," the "omnia vanitas" of one who has exhausted all the sweets of his being, and is weary with dull repetition. I told him that I had almost become for ever incapable of taking a part in active life.

"All this," said Paoli, "is melancholy. I have also studied metaphysicks. I know the arguments for fate and free-will, for the materiality and immateriality of the soul, and even the subtile arguments for and against the existence of matter. 'Ma lasciamo queste dispute ai oziosi. But let us leave these disputes to the idle. Io tengo sempre fermo un gran pensiero. I hold always firm one great object. I never feel a moment of despondency.'"*

* "Do not hope wholly to reason away your troubles; do not feed them with attention, and they will die imperceptibly away. Fix your thoughts upon your business, fill your intervals with company, and sunshine will again break in upon your mind."—Johnson to Boswell, March 5, 1776.—ED.

The contemplation of such a character really existing, was of more service to me than all I had been able to draw from books, from conversation, or from the exertions of my own mind. I had often enough formed the idea of a man continually such as I could conceive in my best moments. But this idea appeared like the ideas we are taught in the schools to form of things which may exist, but do not; of seas of milk, and ships of amber. But I saw my highest idea realised in Paoli. It was impossible for me, speculate as I pleased, to have a little opinion of human nature in him.

One morning I remember, I came in upon him without ceremony, while he was dressing. I was glad to have an opportunity of seeing him in those teasing moments, when according to the Duke de Rochefoucault, no man is a hero to his valet de chambre. The lively nobleman who has a malicious pleasure in endeavouring to divest human nature of its dignity, by exhibiting partial views, and exaggerating faults, would have owned that Paoli was every moment of his life a hero.

Paoli told me that from his earliest years, he had in view the important station which he now holds; so that his sentiments must ever have been great. I asked him how one of such elevated thoughts could submit with any degree of patience, to the unmeaning ceremonies and poor discourse of genteel society, which he certainly was obliged to do while an officer at Naples. "O," said he, "I managed it very easily. Ero connosciuto per una testa singolare, I was known to be a singular man. I talked and joked, and was merry; but I never sat down

to play; I went and came as I pleased. The mirth I like is what is easy and unaffected. Je ne puis souffrir long temps les diseurs de bons mots. I cannot endure long the sayers of good things."

How much superiour is this great man's idea of agreeable conversation to that of professed wits, who are continually straining for smart remarks, and lively repartees. They put themselves to much pain in order to please, and yet please less than if they would just appear as they naturally feel themselves. A company of professed wits has always appeared to me, like a company of artificers employed in some very nice and difficult work, which they are under a necessity of performing.

Though calm and fully master of himself, Paoli is animated with an extraordinary degree of vivacity. Except when indisposed or greatly fatigued, he never sits down but at meals. He is perpetually in motion, walking briskly backwards and forwards. Mr. Samuel Johnson, whose comprehensive and vigorous understanding, has by long observation, attained to a perfect knowledge of human nature, when treating of biography has this reflection. "There are many invisible circumstances which, whether we read as enquiries after natural or moral knowledge; whether we intend to enlarge our science, or increase our virtue, are more important than publick occurrences. Thus Sallust the great master of nature, has not forgotten in his account of Catiline, to remark, that 'his walk was now quick, and again slow,' as an indication of a mind revolving something with violent commotion." *

* "Rambler," number 60.

Ever mindful of the wisdom of the "Rambler," I have accustomed myself to mark the small peculiarities of character. Paoli's being perpetually in motion, nay his being so agitated that, as the same Sallust also says of Catiline, "Neque vigiliis, neque quietibus sedari poterat. He could not be quieted either by watching or by repose," are indications of his being as active and indefatigable as Catiline, but from a very different cause. The conspiratour from schemes of ruin and destruction to Rome; the patriot from schemes of liberty and felicity to Corsica.

Paoli told me that the vivacity of his mind was such, that he could not study above ten minutes at a time. "La testa mi rompa. My head is like to break," said he. "I can never write my lively ideas with my own hand. In writing, they escape from my mind. I call the Abbé Guelfucci, Allons presto, pigliate li pensieri. Come quickly, take my thoughts; and he writes them."

Paoli has a memory like that of Themistocles; for I was assured that he knows the names of almost all the people in the island, their characters, and their connections. His memory as a man of learning, is no less uncommon. He has the best part of the classicks by heart, and he has a happy talent in applying them with propriety, which is rarely to be found. This talent is not always to be reckoned pedantry. The instances in which Paoli is shewn to display it, are a proof to the contrary.

I have heard Paoli recount the revolutions of one of the ancient states, with an energy and a rapidity which shewed him to be master of the subject, to be perfectly

acquainted with every spring and movement of the various events. I have heard him give what the French call, "Une catalogue raisonnée" of the most distinguished men in antiquity. His characters of them were concise, nervous and just. I regret that the fire with which he spoke upon such occasions, so dazzled me that I could not recollect his sayings so as to write them down when I retired from his presence.*

He just lives in the times of antiquity. He said to me, "A young man who would form his mind to glory, must not read modern memoirs; mà Plutarcho, mà Tito Livio; but Plutarch and Titus Livius."

I have seen him fall into a sort of reverie, and break out into sallies of the grandest and noblest enthusiasm. I recollect two instances of this. "What a thought? that thousands owe their happiness to you!" And throwing himself into an attitude, as if he saw the lofty mountain of fame before him. "THERE is my object (pointing to the summit); if I fall, I fall at least THERE (pointing a good way up) magnis tamen excidit ausis."

I ventured to reason like a libertine, that I might be confirmed in virtuous principles by so illustrious a preceptour.† I made light of moral feelings. I argued that conscience was vague and uncertain; that there was

* "I recollect with admiration an animating blaze of eloquence, which roused every intellectual power in me to the highest pitch, but must have dazzled me so much, that my memory could not preserve the substance of his discourse."—Boswell's "Johnson." Date of July 30, 1763.—ED.

† Compare Boswell's discussion with Johnson on May 7th, 1773. —ED.

hardly any vice but what men might be found who have been guilty of it without remorse. "But," said he, "there is no man who has not a horrour at some vice. Different vices and different virtues have the strongest impression on different men! Mà il virtù in astratto è il nutrimento dei nostri cuori. But virtue in the abstract, is the food of our hearts."

Talking of Providence, he said to me with that earnestness with which a man speaks who is anxious to be believed: "I tell you on the word of an honest man, it is impossible for me not to be persuaded that GOD interposes to give freedom to Corsica. A people oppressed like the Corsicans, are certainly worthy of divine assistance. When we were in the most desperate circumstances, I never lost courage, trusting as I did in Providence." I ventured to object: "But why has not Providence interposed sooner?" He replied with a noble, serious and devout air, "Because his ways are unsearchable. I adore him for what he hath done. I revere him in what he hath not done."

I gave Paoli the character of my revered friend Mr. Samuel Johnson. I have often regreted that illustrious men such as humanity produces a few times in the revolution of many ages, should not see each other; and when such arise in the same age, though at the distance of half the globe, I have been astonished how they could forbear to meet.

"As steel sharpneth steel, so doth a man the countenance of his friend," says the wise monarch. What an idea may we not form of an interview between such a

scholar and philosopher as Mr. Johnson, and such a legislatour and general as Paoli! *

I repeated to Paoli several of Mr. Johnson's sayings, so remarkable for strong sense and original humour. I now recollect these two.

When I told Mr. Johnson that a certain authour affected in conversation to maintain, that there was no distinction between virtue and vice, he said, "Why Sir, if the fellow does not think as he speaks, he is lying; and I see not what honour he can propose to himself from having the character of a lyar. But if he does really think that there is no distinction between virtue and vice, why Sir, when he leaves our houses let us count our spoons." †

Of modern infidels and innovatours, he said, "Sir, these are all vain men, and will gratify themselves at any expence. Truth will not afford sufficient food to their vanity; so they have betaken themselves to errour. Truth Sir, is a cow which will yield such people no more milk, and so they are gone to milk the bull." ‡

I felt an elation of mind to see Paoli delighted with the sayings of Mr. Johnson, and to hear him translate them with Italian energy to the Corsican heroes.

I repeated Mr. Johnson's sayings as nearly as I could,

* "On the evening of October 10, 1769, I presented Dr. Johnson to General Paoli. I had greatly wished that two men, for whom I had the highest esteem, should meet. They met with a manly ease, mutually conscious of their own abilities, and of the abilities of each other."—Boswell's "Johnson."—ED.

† See Boswell's "Johnson." Date of July 14th, 1763.—ED.

‡ See Boswell's "Johnson." Date of July 20th, 1763.—ED.

in his own peculiar forcible language, * for which, prejudiced or little criticks have taken upon them to find fault with him. He is above making any answer to them, but I have found a sufficient answer in a general remark in one of his excellent papers. "Difference of thoughts will produce difference of language. He that thinks with more extent than another, will want words of larger meaning." †

I hope to be pardoned for this digression, wherein I pay a just tribute of veneration and gratitude to one from whose writings and conversation I have received instructions of which I experience the value in every scene of my life.

During Paoli's administration there have been few laws made in Corsica. He mentioned one which he has found very efficacious in curbing that vindictive spirit of the Corsicans, of which I have said a good deal in a former part of this work. There was among the Corsicans a most dreadful species of revenge, called "Vendetta trasversa, Collateral revenge," which Petrus Cyrnaeus candidly acknowledges. It was this. If a man had received an injury, and could not find a proper opportunity to be revenged on his enemy personally, he revenged himself on one of his enemy's relations. So barbarous a practice, was the source of innumerable

* "Lord Pembroke said once to me at Wilton, with a happy pleasantry and some truth, that Dr. Johnson's sayings would not appear so extraordinary were it not for his *bow-wow-way*."—Boswell's "Journal of a Tour to the Hebrides," page 7.—ED.

† "Idler," number 70.

assassinations. Paoli knowing that the point of honour was every thing to the Corsicans, opposed it to the progress of the blackest of crimes, fortified by long habits. He made a law, by which it was provided, that this collateral revenge should not only be punished with death, as ordinary murther, but the memory of the offender should be disgraced for ever by a pillar of infamy. He also had it enacted that the same statute should extend to the violatours of an oath of reconciliation, once made.

By thus combating a vice so destructive, he has, by a kind of shock of opposite passions, reduced the fiery Corsicans to a state of mildness, and he assured me that they were now all fully sensible of the equity of that law.

While I was at Sollacarò information was received that the poor wretch who strangled the woman at the instigation of his mistress had consented to accept of his life, upon condition of becoming hangman. This made a great noise among the Corsicans, who were enraged at the creature, and said their nation was now disgraced. Paoli did not think so. He said to me, "I am glad of this. It will be of service. It will contribute to form us to a just subordination.* We have as yet too great an equality among us. As we must have Corsican taylours and Corsican shoemakers, we must also have a Corsican hangman."

* "'Sir,' said Johnson, 'I am a friend to subordination, as most conducive to the happiness of society.'"—Boswell's "Johnson." Date of June 13, 1763.—ED.

I could not help being of a different opinion. The occupations of a taylour and a shoemaker, though mean, are not odious. When I afterwards met M. Rousseau in England, and made him a report of my Corsican expedition, he agreed with me in thinking that it would be something noble for the brave islanders to be able to say that there was not a Corsican but who would rather suffer death than become a hangman; and he also agreed with me, that it might have a good effect to have always a Genoese for the hangman of Corsica.

I must, however, do the Genoese the justice to observe that Paoli told me, that even one of them had suffered death in Corsica, rather than consent to become hangman. When I, with a keenness natural enough in a Briton born with an abhorrence at tyranny, talked with violence against the Genoese, Paoli said with a moderation and candour which ought to do him honour even with the republick, "It is true the Genoese are our enemies; but let us not forget that they are the descendants of those worthies who carried their arms beyond the Hellespont."

There is one circumstance in Paoli's character which I present to my readers with caution, knowing how much it may be ridiculed in an age when mankind are so fond of incredulity, that they seem to pique themselves in contracting their circle of belief as much as possible. But I consider this infidel rage as but a temporary mode of the human understanding, and am well persuaded that e'er long we shall return to a more calm philosophy.

I own I cannot help thinking that though we may boast some improvements in science, and in short, superior degrees of knowledge in things where our faculties can fully reach, yet we should not assume to ourselves sounder judgements than those of our fathers; I will therefore venture to relate that Paoli has at times extraordinary impressions of distant and future events.

The way in which I discovered it was this: Being very desirous of studying so exalted a character, I so far presumed upon his goodness to me, as to take the liberty of asking him a thousand questions with regard to the most minute and private circumstances of his life. Having asked him one day when some of his nobles were present, whether a mind so active as his was employed even in sleep, and if he used to dream much, Signor Casa Bianca said, with an air and tone which implied something of importance, "Sì, si sogna. Yes, he dreams." And upon my asking him to explain his meaning, he told me that the General had often seen in his dreams, what afterwards came to pass. Paoli confirmed this by several instances. Said he, "I can give you no clear explanation of it. I only tell you facts. Sometimes I have been mistaken, but in general these visions have proved true. I cannot say what may be the agency of invisible spirits. They certainly must know more than we do; and there is nothing absurd in supposing that GOD should permit them to communicate their knowledge to us."

He went into a most curious and pleasing disquisition on a subject, which the late ingenious Mr. Baxter has

treated in a very philosophical manner, in his "Inquiry into the Nature of the Human Soul;" * a book which may be read with as much delight, and surely with more advantage than the works of those who endeavour to destroy our belief. Belief is favourable to the human mind, were it for nothing else but to furnish it entertainment. An infidel I should think must frequently suffer from ennui.

It was perhaps affectation in Socrates to say, that all he had learned to know was that he knew nothing. But surely it is a mark of wisdom, to be sensible of the limited extent of human knowledge, to examine with reverence the ways of GOD, nor presumptuously reject any opinion which has been held by the judicious and the learned, because it has been made a cloak for artifice, or had a variety of fictions raised upon it by credulity.

Old Feltham says, "Every dream is not to be counted of; nor yet are all to be cast away with contempt. I would neither be a Stoick, superstitious in all; nor yet an Epicure, considerate of none." † And after observing how much the ancients attended to the interpretation of dreams, he adds, "Were it not for the power of the gospel in crying down the vains ‡ of men, it would appear a wonder how a science so pleasing to humanity, should fall so quite to ruin."§

* Published in October, 1733. "The author is said to be one Baxter."—"Gentleman's Magazine" for 1750, vol. xx.—ED.

† "Feltham's Resolves," Cent. I., Resol. 52.

‡ He means vanity.

§ "Feltham's Resolves," Cent. I., Resol. 52.

The mysterious circumstance in Paoli's character which I have ventured to relate, is universally believed in Corsica. The inhabitants of that island, like the Italians, express themselves much by signs. When I asked one of them if there had been many instances of the General's foreseeing future events, he grasped a large bunch of his hair, and replied, "Tante, Signore, So many, Sir."

It may be said that the General has industriously propagated this opinion, in order that he might have more authority in civilizing a rude and ferocious people, as Lycurgus pretended to have the sanction of the oracle at Delphos, as Numa gave it out that he had frequent interviews with the nymph Egeria, or as Marius persuaded the Romans that he received divine communications from a hind. But I cannot allow myself to suppose that Paoli ever required the aid of pious frauds.

Paoli, though never familiar, has the most perfect ease of behaviour. This is a mark of a real great character. The distance and reserve which some of our modern nobility affect is, because nobility is now little else than a name in comparison of what it was in ancient times. In ancient times, noblemen lived at their country seats, like princes, in hospitable grandeur. They were men of power, and every one of them could bring hundreds of followers into the field. They were then open and affable. Some of our modern nobility are so anxious to preserve an appearance of dignity which they are sensible cannot bear an examination, that they are afraid to let you come near them. Paoli is not so. Those about him come into his apartment at all hours, wake him, help

him on with his clothes, are perfectly free from restraint; yet they know their distance, and, awed by his real greatness, never lose their respect for him.

Though thus easy of access, particular care is taken against such attempts upon the life of the illustrious Chief, as he has good reason to apprehend from the Genoese, who have so often employed assassination merely in a political view, and who would gain so much by assassinating Paoli. A certain number of soldiers are continually on guard upon him; and as still closer guards, he has some faithful Corsican dogs. Of these five or six sleep, some in his chamber, and some at the outside of the chamber-door. He treats them with great kindness, and they are strongly attached to him. They are extremely sagacious, and know all his friends and attendants. Were any person to approach the General during the darkness of the night, they would instantly tear him in pieces.

Having dogs for his attendants, is another circumstance about Paoli similar to the heroes of antiquity. Homer represents Telemachus so attended.

δύω κύνες ἀργοὶ ἕποντο,

—HOMER, "Odyss.," lib. ii., l. 11.

"Two dogs a faithful guard attend behind."

—POPE.

But the description given of the family of Patroclus applies better to Paoli.

Εννέα τῷ γε ἄνακτι τραπεζῆες κυνὲς ἦσαν,
—HOMER, "Iliad," lib. xxiii., l. 73.

"Nine large dogs domestick at his board."
—POPE.

Mr. Pope, in his notes on the second book of the "Odyssey," is much pleased with dogs being introduced, as it furnishes an agreeable instance of ancient simplicity. He observes that Virgil thought this circumstance worthy of his imitation, in describing old Evander.* So we read of Syphax, general of the Numidians, "Syphax inter duos canes stans, Scipionem appellavit.† Syphax standing between two dogs called to Scipio."

Talking of courage, he made a very just distinction between constitutional courage and courage from reflection. "Sir Thomas More," said he, "would not probably have mounted a breach so well as a sergeant who had never thought of death. But a sergeant would not on a scaffold have shewn the calm resolution of Sir Thomas More."

On this subject he told me a very remarkable anecdote, which happened during the last war in Italy. At the siege of Tortona, the commander of the army which lay before the town, ordered Carew an Irish officer in the service of Naples, to advance with a detachment to a

* "Æneid," lib. viii., l. 461.

† I mention this on the authority of an excellent scholar, and one of our best writers, Mr. Joseph Warton, in his notes on the Aeneid; for I have not been able to find the passage in Livy which he quotes.

particular post. Having given his orders, he whispered to Carew, "Sir, I know you to be a gallant man. I have therefore put you upon this duty. I tell you in confidence, it is certain death for you all. I place you there to make the enemy spring a mine below you." Carew made a bow to the general, and led on his men in silence to the dreadful post. He there stood with an undaunted countenance, and having called to one of the soldiers for a draught of wine, "Here," said he, "I drink to all those who bravely fall in battle." Fortunately at that instant Tortona capitulated, and Carew escaped. But he had thus a full opportunity of displaying a rare instance of determined intrepidity. It is with pleasure that I record an anecdote so much to the honour of a gentleman of that nation, on which illiberal reflections are too often thrown, by those of whom it little deserves them. Whatever may be the rough jokes of wealthy insolence, or the envious sarcasms of needy jealousy, the Irish have ever been, and will continue to be, highly regarded upon the continent.

Paoli's personal authority among the Corsicans struck me much. I have seen a crowd of them, with eagerness and impetuosity, endeavouring to approach him, as if they would have burst into his apartment by force. In vain did the guards attempt to restrain them; but when he called to them in a tone of firmness, "Non c'è ora ricorso, No audience now," they were hushed at once.

He one afternoon gave us an entertaining dissertation on the ancient art of war. He observed that the ancients

allowed of little baggage, which they very properly called "impedimenta;" whereas the moderns burthen themselves with it to such a degree, that 50,000 of our present soldiers are allowed as much baggage as was formerly thought sufficient for all the armies of the Roman empire. He said it was good for soldiers to be heavy armed, as it renders them proportionably robust; and he remarked that when the Romans lightened their arms the troops became enfeebled.* He made a very curious observation with regard to the towers full of armed men, which we are told were borne on the backs of their elephants. He said it must be a mistake; for if the towers were broad, there would not be room for them on the backs of elephants; for he and a friend who was an able calculatour, had measured a very large elephant at Naples, and made a computation of the space necessary to hold the number of men said to be contained in those towers, and they found that the back of the broadest elephant would not be sufficient, after making the fullest allowance for what might be hung by ballance on either side of the animal. If again the towers were high, they would fall; for he did not think it at all probable that the Romans had the art of tying on such monstrous machines at a time when they had not learnt the use even of girths to their saddles. He said he did not give too much credit to the figures on Trajan's pillar,

* "The enervated soldiers abandoned their own, and the public defence; and their pusillanimous indolence may be considered as the immediate cause of the downfall of the empire." Gibbon's "Decline and Fall," chapter 27.—ED.

many of which were undoubtedly false. He said it was his opinion, that those towers were only drawn by the elephants; an opinion founded in probability, and free from the difficulties of that which has been commonly received.

Talking of various schemes of life, fit for a man of spirit and education; I mentioned to him that of being a foreign minister. He said he thought it a very agreeable employment for a man of parts and address, during some years of his life. "In that situation," said he, "a man will insensibly attain to a greater knowledge of men and manners, and a more perfect acquaintance with the politicks of Europe. He will be promoted according to the returns which he makes to his court. They must be accurate, distinct, without fire or ornament. He may subjoin his own opinion, but he must do it with great modesty. The ministry at home are proud."

He said the greatest happiness was not in glory, but in goodness; and that Penn in his American colony, where he had established a people in quiet and contentment, was happier than Alexander the Great after destroying multitudes at the conquest of Thebes. He observed that the history of Alexander is obscure and dubious; for his captains who divided his kingdom, were too busy to record his life and actions, and would at any rate wish to render him odious to posterity.

Never was I so thoroughly sensible of my own defects as while I was in Corsica. I felt how small were my abilities, and how little I knew. Ambitious to be the companion of Paoli, and to understand a country and a

people which roused me so much, I wished to be a Sir James MacDonald.*

The last day which I spent with Paoli appeared of inestimable value. I thought him more than usually great and amiable, when I was upon the eve of parting from him. The night before my departure, a little incident happened which shewed him in a most agreeable light. When the servants were bringing in the desert after supper, one of them chanced to let fall a plate of walnuts. Instead of flying into a passion at what the man could not help, Paoli said with a smile, "No matter;" and turning to me, "It is a good sign for you, Sir, Tempus est spargere nuces, It is time to scatter walnuts. It is a matrimonial omen: You must go home to your own country, and marry some fine woman whom you really like. I shall rejoice to hear of it."

This was a pretty allusion to the Roman ceremony at

* Sir James MacDonald, baronet of the Isle of Sky, who at the age of one and twenty, had the learning and abilities of a Professour and a statesman, with the accomplishments of a man of the world. Eton and Oxford will ever remember him as one of their greatest ornaments.† He was well known to the most distinguished in Europe, but was carried off from all their expectations. He died at Frescati, near Rome, in 1765. Had he lived a little longer, I believe I should have prevailed with him to visit Corsica.

† Horace Walpole thus describes him in a letter dated September 30th, 1765:—"He is a very extraordinary young man for variety of learning. He is rather too wise for his age, and too fond of showing it; but when he has seen more of the world, he will choose to know less." See also Boswell's "Johnson." Date of July 20th, 1763.—ED.

weddings, of scattering walnuts. So Virgil's "Damon" says—

"Mopse novas incide faces: tibi ducitur uxor.
Sparge marite nuces: tibi deserit Hesperus Oetam."
—VIRG. "Eclog." viii, l. 30.

"Thy bride comes forth! begin the festal rites!
The walnuts strew! prepare the nuptial lights!
O envied husband, now thy bliss is nigh!
Behold for thee bright Hesper mounts the sky!"
—WARTON.

When I again asked Paoli if it was possible for me in any way to shew him my great respect and attachment, he replied, "Ricordatevi che Io vi sia amico, e scrivetemi. Remember that I am your friend, and write to me." I said I hoped that when he honoured me with a letter, he would write not only as a commander, but as a philosopher and a man of letters. He took me by the hand, and said, "As a friend." I dare not transcribe from my private notes the feelings which I had at this interview. I should perhaps appear too enthusiastick. I took leave of Paoli with regret and agitation, not without some hopes of seeing him again. From having known intimately so exalted a character, my sentiments of human nature were raised, while, by a sort of contagion, I felt an honest ardour to distinguish myself, and be useful, as far as my situation and abilities would allow; and I was, for the rest of my life, set free from a slavish timidity in the presence of great men, for where shall I find a man greater than Paoli?

When I set out from Sollacarò I felt myself a good deal indisposed. The old house of Colonna, like the family of its master, was much decayed; so that both wind and rain found their way into my bed-chamber. From this I contracted a severe cold, which ended in a tertian ague. There was no help for it. I might well submit to some inconveniences, where I had enjoyed so much happiness.

I was accompanied a part of the road by a great swarthy priest, who had never been out of Corsica. He was a very Hercules for strength and resolution. He and two other Corsicans took a castle, garrisoned by no less than fifteen Genoese. Indeed the Corsicans have such a contempt for their enemies, that I have heard them say, "Basterebbero le donne contra i Genovesi, Our women would be enough against the Genoese." This priest was a bluff, hearty, roaring fellow, troubled neither with knowledge nor care. He was ever and anon shewing me how stoutly his nag could caper. He always rode some paces before me, and sat in an attitude half turned round, with his hand clapped upon the crupper. Then he would burst out with comical songs about the devil and the Genoese,* and I don't know what all. In short, notwithstanding my feverishness, he kept me laughing whether I would or no.

* "When he came to the part—
'We'll still make 'em run, and we'll still make 'em sweat,
In spite of the devil and Brussels Gazette!'
his eyes would sparkle as with the freshness of an impending event."
—Letter of Charles Lambe to H. C. Robinson, January 20th, 1826.
—ED.

I was returning to Corte, but I varied my road a little from the way I had come, going more upon the low country, and nearer the western shore.

At Cauro I had a fine view of Ajaccio and its environs. My ague was sometime of forming, so I had frequent intervals of ease, which I employed in observing whatever occurred. I was lodged at Cauro in the house of Signor Peraldi of Ajaccio, who received me with great politeness. I found here another provincial magistracy. Before supper, Signor Peraldi and a young Abbé of Ajaccio entertained me with some airs on a violin. After they had shewn me their taste in fine improved musick, they gave me some original Corsican airs, and at my desire, they brought up four of the guards of the magistracy, and made them shew me a Corsican dance. It was truly savage. They thumped with their heels, sprung upon their toes, brandished their arms, wheeled and leaped with the most violent gesticulations. It gave me the idea of an admirable war dance.

During this journey I had very bad weather. I cannot forget the worthy rectour of Cuttoli, whose house afforded me a hospitable retreat, when wet to the skin, and quite overcome by the severity of the storm, which my sickness made me little able to resist. He was directly such a venerable hermit as we read of in the old romances. His figure and manner interested me at first sight. I found he was a man well respected in the island, and that the General did him the honour to correspond with him. He gave me a simple collation of eggs,

chestnuts and wine, and was very liberal of his ham and other more substantial victuals to my servant. The honest Swiss was by this time very well pleased to have his face turned towards the continent. He was heartily tired of seeing foreign parts, and meeting with scanty meals and hard beds, in an island which he could not comprehend the pleasure of visiting. He said to me, "Si J' etois encore une fois retourné à mon pais parmi ces montagnes de Suisse dont monsieur fait tant des plaisanteries, Je verrai qui m'engagera à les quitter. If I were once more at home in my own country, among those mountains of Switzerland, on which you have had so many jokes, I will see who shall prevail with me to quit them."

The General, out of his great politeness, would not allow me to travel without a couple of chosen guards to attend me in case of any accidents. I made them my companions, to relieve the tediousness of my journey. One of them called Ambrosio, was a strange iron-coloured fearless creature. He had been much in war; careless of wounds, he was cooly intent on destroying the enemy. He told me, as a good anecdote, that having been so lucky as to get a view of two Genoese exactly in a line, he took his aim, and shot them both through the head at once. He talked of this just as one would talk of shooting a couple of crows. I was sure I needed be under no apprehension; but I don't know how, I desired Ambrosio to march before me that I might see him.

I was upon my guard how I treated him. But as

sickness frets one's temper, I sometimes forgot myself, and called him "bestia, blockhead;" and once when he was at a loss which way to go, at a wild woody part of the country, I fell into a passion, and called to him "Mi maraviglio che un uomo si bravo può esser si stupido. I am amazed that so brave a man can be so stupid." However by afterwards calling him friend, and speaking softly to him, I soon made him forget my ill humour, and we proceeded as before.

Paoli had also been so good as to make me a present of one of his dogs, a strong and fierce animal. But he was too old to take an attachment to me, and I lost him between Lyons and Paris. The General has promised me a young one, to be a guard at Auchinleck.

At Bogognano I came upon the same road I had formerly travelled from Corte, where I arrived safe after all my fatigues. My good fathers of the Franciscan convent, received me like an old acquaintance, and shewed a kind concern at my illness. I sent my respects to the Great Chancellor, who returned me a note, of which I insert a translation as a specimen of the hearty civility to be found among the highest in Corsica.

"Many congratulations to Mr. Boswell on his return from beyond the mountains, from his servant Massesi, who is at the same time very sorry for his indisposition, which he is persuaded has been occasioned by his severe journey. He however flatters himself, that when Mr. Boswell has reposed himself a little, he will recover his usual health. In the mean time he has taken the liberty to send him a couple of fowls, which he hopes, he will

honour with his acceptance, as he will need some refreshment this evening. He wishes him a good night, as does his little servant Luiggi, who will attend him to-morrow, to discharge his duty."

My ague distressed me so much, that I was confined to the convent for several days. I did not however weary. I was visited by the Great Chancellor, and several others of the civil magistrates, and by Padre Mariani rectour of the university, a man of learning and abilities, as a proof of which he had been three years at Madrid in the character of secretary to the General of the Franciscans. I remember a very eloquent expression of his on the state of his country. "Corsica," said he, "has for many years past, been bleeding at all her veins. They are now closed. But after being so severely exhausted, it will take some time before she can recover perfect strength." I was also visited by Padre Leonardo, of whose animating discourse I have made mention in a former part of this book.

Indeed I should not have been at a loss though my very reverend fathers had been all my society. I was not in the least looked upon as a heretick. Difference of faith was forgotten in hospitality. I went about the convent as if I had been in my own house; and the fathers without any impropriety of mirth, were yet as chearful as I could desire.

I had two surgeons to attend me at Corte, a Corsican and a Piedmontese; and I got a little Jesuit's bark from the spiceria, or apothecary's shop, of the Capuchin convent. I did not however expect to be effectually cured

till I should get to Bastia. I found it was perfectly safe for me to go thither. There was a kind of truce between the Corsicans and the French. Paoli had held two different amicable conferences with M. de Marboeuf their commander in chief, and was so well with him, that he gave me a letter of recommendation to him.

On one of the days that my ague disturbed me least, I walked from the convent to Corte, purposely to write a letter to Mr. Samuel Johnson. I told my revered friend, that from a kind of superstition agreeable in a certain degree to him, as well as to myself, I had during my travels, written to him from Loca Solennia, places in some measure sacred. That as I had written to him from the Tomb of Melancthon, sacred to learning and piety, I now wrote to him from the palace of Pascal Paoli, sacred to wisdom and liberty; knowing that however his political principles may have been represented, he had always a generous zeal for the common rights of humanity. I gave him a sketch of the great things I had seen in Corsica, and promised him a more ample relation.*

* "He kept the greater part of my letters very carefully; and a short time before his death was attentive enough to seal them up in bundles, and ordered them to be delivered to me, which was accordingly done. Amongst them I found one, of which I had not made a copy, and which I own I read with pleasure at the distance of almost twenty years. It is dated November, 1765, at the palace of Pascal Paoli, in Corte, and is full of generous enthusiasm. After giving a sketch of what I had seen and heard in that island, it proceeded thus:—'I dare to call this a spirited tour. I dare to challenge your approbation.'"—Boswell's "Johnson." Date of 1765.

Mr. Johnson was pleased with what I wrote here; for I received at Paris an answer from him which I keep as a valuable charter. "When you return, you will return to an unaltered, and I hope, unalterable friend. All that you have to fear from me, is the vexation of disappointing me. No man loves to frustrate expectations which have been formed in his favour, and the pleasure which I promise myself from your journals and remarks, is so great, that perhaps no degree of attention or discernment will be sufficient to afford it. Come home however and take your chance. I long to see you, and to hear you; and hope that we shall not be so long separated again. Come home, and expect such a welcome as is due to him whom a wise and noble curiosity has led where perhaps, no native of this country ever was before."*

I at length set out for Bastia. I went the first night to Rostino, hoping to have found there Signor Clemente de' Paoli. But unluckily he had gone upon a visit to

* "Having had no letter from him, ... and having been told by somebody that he was offended at my having put into my book an extract of his letter to me at Paris, I was impatient to be with him. I found that Dr. Johnson had sent a letter to me to Scotland, and that I had nothing to complain of but his being more indifferent to my anxiety than I wished him to be." In the letter, which is dated March 23, 1768, Johnson had said, "I have omitted a long time to write to you, without knowing very well why. I could now tell why I should not write; for who would write to men who publish the letters of their friends without their leave? Yet I write to you, in spite of my caution, to tell you that I shall be glad to see you, and that I wish you would empty your head of Corsica, which I think has filled it rather too long."—ED.

his daughter; so that I had not an opportunity of seeing this extraordinary personage, of whom I have given so full an account,* for a great part of which I am indebted to Mr. Burnaby.

Next day I reached Vescovato, where I was received by Signor Buttafoco, who proved superiour to the character I had conceived of him from the letter of M. Rousseau.† I found in him the incorrupted virtues of the brave islander, with the improvements of the continent. I found him, in short, to be a man of principle, abilities and knowledge; and at the same time a man of the world. He is now deservedly raised to the rank of colonel of the Royal Corsicans, in the service of France.

I past some days with Signor Buttafoco, from whose conversation I received so much pleasure, that I in a great measure forgot my ague.

As various discourses have been held in Europe, concerning an invitation given to M. Rousseau to come to Corsica; and as that affair was conducted by Signor Buttafoco, who shewed me the whole correspondence between him and M. Rousseau, I am enabled to give a distinct account of it.

M. Rousseau in his Political Treatise, entitled "Du Contract Social," has the following observation: "Il est encore en Europe un pays capable de législation; c'est l'isle de Corse. La valeur et la constance avec laquelle ce brave peuple a su recouvrer et défendre sa liberté

* See Appendix C.—ED.

† In this letter a high character is given of Buttafoco. See page 141.—ED.

mériteroit bien que quelque homme sage lui apprit à la conserver. J'ai quelque pressentiment qu'un jour cette petite isle étonnera l'Europe.* There is yet one country in Europe, capable of legislation; and that is the island of Corsica. The valour and the constancy with which that brave people have recovered and defended its liberty, would well deserve that some wise man should teach them how to preserve it. I have some presentiment that one day that little island will astonish Europe."

Signor Buttafoco, upon this, wrote to M. Rousseau, returning him thanks for the honour he had done to the Corsican nation, and strongly inviting him to come over, and be that wise man who should illuminate their minds.

I was allowed to take a copy of the wild philosopher's answer to this invitation; it is written with his usual eloquence.

"Il est superflu, Monsieur, de chercher à exciter mon zele pour l'entreprise que vous me proposez. Sa† seule idée m'éleve l'ame et me transporte. Je croirois la‡ reste de mes jours bien noblement, bien vertueusement et bien heureusement employés.§ Je croirois meme avoir bien racheté l'inutilité des autres, si je pouvois rendre ce triste reste bon en quelque chose à vos braves compatriotes; si je pouvois concourir par quelque conseil utile aux vues de votre‖ digne Chef et aux vôtres; de ce côté-là donc soyez sur de moi. Ma vie et mon coeur sont à vous."

* "Du Contract Social," liv. ii., chap. 10.

† La.—ED. ‡ Le.—ED. § Employé.—ED.

‖ Leur. I have made the corrections by the copy given in "Rousseau's Collected Works."—ED.

"It is superfluous, Sir, to endeavour to excite my zeal for the undertaking which you propose to me. The very idea of it elevates my soul and transports me. I should esteem the rest of my days very nobly, very virtuously, and very happily employed. I should even think that I well redeemed the inutility of many of my days that are past, if I could render these sad remains of any advantage to your brave countrymen. If by any useful advice, I could concur in the views of your worthy Chief, and in yours. So far then you may be sure of me. My life and my heart are devoted to you."

Such were the first effusions of Rousseau. Yet before he concluded even this first letter, he made a great many complaints of his adversities and persecutions, and started a variety of difficulties as to the proposed enterprise.

The correspondence was kept up for some time, but the enthusiasm of the paradoxical philosopher gradually subsiding, the scheme came to nothing.*

As I have formerly observed, M. de Voltaire thought proper to exercise his pleasantry upon occasion of this proposal,† in order to vex the grave Rousseau, whom he

* In one of his letters, dated March 24, 1765, Rousseau said:—"Sur le peu que j'ai parcouru de vos mémoires, je vois que mes idées diffèrent prodigieusement de celles de votre nation. Il ne serait pas possible que le plan que je proposerais ne fît beaucoup de mécontents, et peut-être vous-même tout le premier. Or, Monsieur, je suis rassasié de disputes et de querelles."—ED.

† "Je reçus bien la lettre de M. Paoli; mais il faut vous dire, Monsieur, que le bruit de la proposition que vous m'aviez faite s'étant répandu sans que je sache comment, M. de

never could bear. I remember he used to talk of him with a satyrical smile, and call him, "Ce Garçon, That Lad;" I find this among my notes of M. de Voltaire's conversations, when I was with him at his Chateau de Ferney, where he entertains with the elegance rather of a real prince than of a poetical one.

To have Voltaire's assertion contradicted by a letter under Paoli's own hand, was no doubt a sufficient satisfaction to Rousseau.

From the account which I have attempted to give of the present constitution of Corsica, and of its illustrious Legislatour and General, it may well be conceived that the scheme of bringing M. Rousseau into that island, was magnified to an extravagant degree by the reports of the continent. It was said, that Rousseau was to be made no less than a Solon by the Corsicans, who were implicitely to receive from him a code of laws.

This was by no means the scheme. Paoli was too able a man to submit the legislation of his country to one who was an entire stranger to the people, the manners, and in short to every thing in the island. Nay, I know well that Paoli pays more regard to what has been tried by the experience of ages than to the most beautiful ideal systems. Besides, the Corsicans were not all at once to be moulded at will. They were to be gradually prepared, and by one law laying the

Voltaire fit entendre à tout le monde que cette proposition était une invention de sa façon; il prétendait m'avoir écrit au nom des Corses une lettre contrefaite dont j'avais été la dupe."—Rousseau to Butta-Foco, May 26, 1765.—ED.

foundation for another, a compleat fabrick of jurisprudence was to be formed.

Paoli's intention was to grant a generous asylum to Rousseau, to avail himself of the shining talents which appeared in his writings, by consulting with him, and catching the lights of his rich imagination, from many of which he might derive improvements to those plans which his own wisdom had laid down.

But what he had principally in view, was to employ the pen of Rousseau in recording the heroick actions of the brave islanders. It is to be regretted that this project did not take place. The father of the present colonel Buttafoco made large collections for many years back. These are carefully preserved, and when joined to those made by the Abbé Rostini, would furnish ample materials for a History of Corsica. This, adorned with the genius of Rousseau, would have been one of the noblest monuments of modern times.

Signor Buttafoco accompanied me to Bastia. It was comfortable to enter a good warm town after my fatigues. We went to the house of Signor Morelli, a counsellor at law here, with whom we supped. I was lodged for that night by a friend of Signor Buttafoco, in another part of the town.

Next morning I waited on M. de Marboeuf. Signor Buttafoco introduced me to him, and I presented him the letter of recommendation from Paoli. He gave me a most polite reception. The brilliancy of his levee pleased me; it was a scene so different from those which I had been for some time accustomed to see. It was

like passing at once from a rude and early age to a polished modern age; from the mountains of Corsica to the banks of the Seine.

My ague was now become so violent that it got the better of me altogether. I was obliged to ask the French general's permission to have a chair set for me in the circle. When M. de Marboeuf was informed of my being ill, he had the goodness to ask me to stay in his house till I should recover; "I insist upon it," said he, "I have a warm room for you. My servants will get you bouillons, and every thing proper for a sick man; and we have an excellent physician." I mention all these circumstances to shew the goodness of M. de Marboeuf, to whom I shall ever consider myself as under great obligations, His invitation was given in so kind and cordial a manner, that I willingly accepted of it.

I found M. de Marboeuf a worthy open-hearted Frenchman. It is a common and a very just remark, that one of the most agreeable characters in the world is a Frenchman who has served long in the army, and has arrived at that age when the fire of youth is properly tempered. Such a character is gay without levity, and judicious without severity. Such a character was the Count de Marboeuf, of an ancient family in Britanny, where there is more plainness of character than among the other French. He had been Gentilhomme de la Chambre to the worthy King Stanislaus.

He took a charge of me as if he had been my near relation. He furnished me with books and every thing

he could think of to amuse me. While the physician ordered me to be kept very quiet, M. de Marboeuf would allow nobody to go near me, but payed me a friendly visit alone. As I grew better he gradually encreased my society, bringing with him more and more of his officers; so that I had at last the honour of very large companies in my apartment. The officers were polite agreeable men: some of them had been prisoners in England, during the last war. One of them was a Chevalier de St. Louis, of the name of Douglas, a descendant of the illustrious house of Douglas in Scotland, by a branch settled near to Lyons. This gentleman often came and sat with me. The idea of our being in some sort countrymen, was pleasing to us both.

I found here an English woman of Penrith in Cumberland. When the Highlanders marched through that country in the year 1745, she had married a soldier of the French picquets in the very midst of all the confusion and danger, and when she could hardly understand one word he said. Such freaks will love sometimes take.

"Sic visum Veneri; cui placet impares
Formas atque animos sub juga ahenea
Saevo mittere cum joco."

—HORAT. lib. i., Od. 33.

"So Venus wills, whose power controuls
The fond affections of our souls;
With sportive cruelty she binds
Unequal forms, unequal minds."

—FRANCIS.

M. de la Chapelle was the physician who attended me. He had been several years physician to the army at Minorca, and had now the same office in Corsica. I called him the physician of the isles. He was indeed an excellent one. That gayeté de coeur which the French enjoy, runs through all their professions. I remember the phrase of an English common soldier who told me, "that at the battle of Fontenoy, his captain received a shot in the breast, and fell," said the soldier, "with his spontoon in his hand, as prettily killed as ever I see'd a gentleman." The soldier's phrase might be used in talking of almost every thing which the French do. I may say I was prettily cured by M. de la Chapelle.

But I think myself bound to relate a circumstance which shews him and his nation in the genteelest light. Though he attended me with the greatest assiduity, yet, when I was going away, he would not accept of a single Louis d'or. "No Sir," said he, "I am nobly paid by my king. I am physician to his army here. If I can at the same time, be of service to the people of the country, or to any gentleman who may come among us, I am happy. But I must be excused from taking money." M. Brion the surgeon major behaved in the same manner.

As soon as I had gathered a little strength, I walked about as well as I could; and saw what was to be seen at Bastia. Signor Morelli was remarkably obliging. He made me presents of books and antiques, and of every other curiosity relating to Corsica. I never saw a more generous man. Signor Carassa, a Corsican officer in the service of France, with the order of St. Louis, was also

very obliging. Having made a longer stay in Corsica than I intended, my finances were exhausted, and he let me have as much money as I pleased. M. Barlé, secretary to M. de Marboeuf, was also very obliging. In short, I know not how to express my thankfulness to all the good people whom I saw at Bastia.

The French seemed to agree very well with the Corsicans. Of old, those islanders were much indebted to the interposition of France in their favour. But since the days of Sampiero, there have been many variances between them. A singular one happened in the reign of Lewis XIV. The Pope's Corsican guards in some fit of passion insulted the French ambassadour at Rome. * The superb monarch resolved to revenge this outrage. But Pope Alexander VII. foreseeing the consequences,

* According to Voltaire it was the French who were the most to blame. Their ambassador had disgusted the Romans by his arrogance. His servants exaggerated their master's faults, and imitated "la jeunesse indisciplinable de Paris, qui se fesait alors un honneur d'attaquer toutes les nuits le guet qui vieille à la garde de la ville!" Some of them ventured one day to fall sword in hand on the Corsican guards. The Corsicans in their turn besieged the ambassador's house. Shots were fired, and a page was killed. The ambassador at once left Rome. "Le pape différa tant qu'il put la réparation, persuadé qu' avec les Français il n'y a qu' à temporiser, et que tout s'oublie." He hanged, however, a Corsican, and he took other measures to appease Lewis XIV. He learnt with alarm that the French troops were entering Italy, and that Rome was threatened with a siege. "Dans d'autres temps les excommunications de Rome auraient suivi ces outrages; mais c'étaient des armes usées et devenues ridicules." He was forced to give full satisfaction. The pyramid mentioned by Boswell was set up, but in a few years the French King allowed it to be destroyed.—See Voltaire's "Siècle de Louis XIV.," chap. vii.—ED.

agreed to the conditions required by France; which were, that the Corsican guards should be obliged to depart the ecclesiastical state, that the nation should be declared incapable ever to serve the holy see, and, that opposite to their ancient guard-house, should be erected a pyramid inscribed with their disgrace.*

Le Brun, whose royal genius could magnify and enrich every circumstance in honour of his sovereign, has given this story as a medallion on one of the compartments of the great gallery at Versailles. France appears with a stately air, shewing to Rome the design of the pyramid; and Rome, though bearing a shield marked S. P. Q. R. receives the design with most submissive humility.

I wish that France had never done the Corsicans greater harm than depriving them of the honour of being the Pope's guards. Boisseux and Maillebois † cannot easily be forgotten; nor can the brave islanders be blamed for complaining that a powerful nation should interpose to retard their obtaining entire possession of their country and of undisturbed freedom.

M. de Marboeuf appeared to conduct himself with the greatest prudence and moderation. He told me that he wished to preserve peace in Corsica. He had entered into a convention with Paoli, mutually to give up such criminals as should fly into each others territories. Formerly not one criminal in a hundred was punished. There was no communication between the Corsicans and

* Corps Diplomatique, anno 1664.

† The commanders of the French troops that invaded Corsica in 1738 and 1739.—ED.

the Genoese; and if a criminal could but escape from the one jurisdiction to the other, he was safe. This was very easily done, so that crimes from impunity were very frequent. By this equitable convention, justice has been fully administered.

Perhaps indeed the residence of the French in Corsica, has, upon the whole, been an advantage to the patriots. There have been markets twice a week at the frontiers of each garrison-town, where the Corsican peasants have sold all sorts of provisions, and brought in a good many French crowns; which have been melted down into Corsican money. A cessation of arms for a few years has been a breathing time to the nation, to prepare itself for one great effort, which will probably end in a total expulsion of the Genoese. A little leisure has been given for attending to civil improvements, towards which the example of the French has in no small degree contributed. Many of the soldiers were excellent handi-craftsmen, and could instruct the natives in various arts.

M. de Marboeuf entertained himself by laying out several elegant pieces of pleasure ground; and such were the humane and amicable dispositions of this respectable officer, that he was at pains to observe what things were most wanted in Corsica, and then imported them from France, in order to shew an example to the inhabitants. He introduced, in particular, the culture of potatoes, of which there were none in the island upon his arrival. *

* About the year 1750 potatoes were not commonly known in Kidderminster, as I know from an anecdote recorded by my grandfather.—ED.

This root will be of considerable service to the Corsicans, it will make a wholesome variety in their food; and as there will thereby, of consequence, be less home consumption of chestnuts, they will be able to export a greater quantity of them.

M. de Marboeuf made merry upon the reports which had been circulated, that I was no less than a minister from the British court. The "Avignon Gazette" brought us one day information that the English were going to establish Un Bureau de Commerce in Corsica. "O Sir," said he, "the secret is out. I see now the motive of your destination to these parts. It is you who are to establish this Bureau de Commerce."

Idle as these rumours were, it is a fact that, when I was at Genoa, Signor Gherardi, one of their secretaries of state, very seriously told me, "Monsieur, vous m'avez fait trembler quoique je ne vous ai jamais vu. Sir, you have made me tremble although I never saw you before." And when I smiled and assured him that I was just a simple traveller, he shook his head; but said, he had very authentick information concerning me. He then told me with great gravity, "That while I travelled in Corsica, I was drest in scarlet and gold; but when I payed my respects to the Supreme Council at Corte, I appeared in a full suit of black." These important truths I fairly owned to him, and he seemed to exult over me.

I was more and more obliged to M. de Marboeuf. When I was allowed by my physican, to go to his Excellency's table where we had always a large company, and

every thing in great magnificence, he was so careful of me, that he would not suffer me to eat any thing, or taste a glass of wine, more than was prescribed for me. He used to say, "I am here both physician and commander in chief; so you must submit." He very politely prest me to make some stay with him, saying, "We have taken care of you when sick, I think we have a claim to you for a while, when in health." His kindness followed me after I left him. It procured me an agreeable reception from M. Michel, the French chargé d'affaires at Genoa; and was the occasion of my being honoured with great civilities at Paris, by M. L'Abbé de Marboeuf conseiller d'etat, brother of the Count, and possessing similar virtues in private life.

I quitted Corsica with reluctance, when I thought of the illustrious Paoli. I wrote to him from Bastia, informing him of my illness, which I said, was owing to his having made me a man of so much consequence, that instead of putting me into a snug little room, he had lodged me in the magnificent old palace, where the wind and rain entered.

His answer to my first letter is written with so much spirit, that I begged his permission to publish it, which he granted in the genteelest manner, saying, "I do not remember the contents of the letter; but I have such a confidence in Mr. Boswell, that I am sure he would not publish it if there was any thing in it improper for publick view; so he has my permission." I am thus enabled to present my readers with an original letter from Paoli.

"TO JAMES BOSWELL, Esq.,

"OF AUCHINLECK, SCOTLAND.

"STIMATISSIMO SIGNOR BOSWELL.

"Ricevei la lettera che mi favori da Bastia, e mi consolo assai colla notizia di essersi rimessa in perfetta salute. Buon per lei che cadde in mano di un valente medico! Quando altra volta il disgusto de' paesi colti, ed ameni lo prendesse, e lo portasse in questa infelice contrada, procurerò che sia alloggiata in camere più calde, e custodita di quelle della casa Colonna in Sollacarò; mà ella ancora dovrà contentarsi di non viaggiare quando la giornata, e la stagione vogliono che si resti in casa per attendere il tempo buono. Io resto ora impaziente per la lettera che ha promesso scrivermi da Genova, dove dubito assai che la delicatezza di quelle dame non le abbia fatto fare qualche giorno di quarantena, per ispurgarsi di ogni anche più leggiero influsso, che possa avere portato seco dell' aria di questo paese; e molto più, se le fosse venuto il capriccio di far vedere quell' abito di veluto Corso, e quel berrettone, di cui i Corsi vogliono l'origine dagli elmi antichi, ed i Genovesi lo dicono inventato da quelli, che, rubando alla strada, non vogliano essere conosciuti: come se in tempo del loro governo avessero mai avuta apprensione di castigo i ladri pubblici? Son sicuro però, che ella presso avrà il buon partito con quelle amabili, e delicate persone, insinuando alle medesime, che il cuore delle belle è fatto per la compassione, non per il disprezzo, e per la tirannia; e cosi sarà rientrato facilmente nella lor grazia. Io ritornato in Corte ebbi

subito la notizia del secreto sbarco dell' Abbatucci nelle spiaggie di Solenzara. Tutte le apparenze fanno credere che il medesimo sia venuto con disegni opposti alla pubblica quiete; pure si è constituito in castello, e protesta ravvedimento. Nel venire per Bocognano si seppe, che un capitano riformato Genovese cercava compagni per assassinarmi. Non potè rinvenirne e vedendosi scoperto si pose alla macchia, dove è stato ucciso dalle squadriglie che gli tenevano dietro i magistrati delle provincie oltramontane. Queste insidie non sembrano buoni preliminari del nostro accomodamento colla republica di Genova. Io sto passando il sindicato a questa provincia di Nebbio. Verso il 10 dell' entrante anderò per l' istesso oggetto in quella del Capocorso, ed il mese di Febrajo facilmente mi trattenerò in Balagna. Ritornerò poi in Corte alla primavera, per prepararmi all' apertura della consulta generale. In ogni luogo avrò presente la sua amicizia, e sarò desideroso de' continui suoi riscontri. Frattanto ella mi creda.

"Suo affettuosissimo amico

"PASQUALE DE' PAOLI."

"PATRIMONIO, 23 Decembre, 1765."

"MUCH ESTEEMED MR. BOSWELL,

"I RECEIVED the letter which you wrote to me from Bastia, and am much comforted by hearing that you are restored to perfect health. It is lucky for you that you fell into the hands of an able physician. When you shall again be seized with a disgust at improved and agreeable

countries, and shall return to this ill-fated land, I will take care to have you lodged in warmer and better finished apartments than those of the house of Colonna, at Sollacarò. But you again should be satisfied not to travel when the weather and the season require one to keep within doors, and wait for a fair day. I expect with impatience the letter which you promised to write to me from Genoa, where I much suspect that the delicacy of the ladies will have obliged you to perform some days of quarantine, for purifying you from every the least infection, which you may have carried with you from the air of this country; and still more so, if you have taken the whim to show that suit of Corsican velvet * and that bonnet of which the Corsicans will have the origin to be from the ancient helmets, whereas the Genoese say that it was invented by those who rob on the high way, in order to disguise themselves; as if during the Genoese government publick robbers needed to fear punishment. I am sure however, that you will have taken the proper method with these amiable and delicate persons, insinuating to them, that the hearts of beauties are formed for compassion, and not for disdain and tyranny: and so you will have been easily restored to their good graces. Immediately on my return to Corte, I received information of the secret landing of Abbatucci, † on the coast of Solenzara. All appearances

* By Corsican velvet he means the coarse stuff made in the island, which is all that the Corsicans have in stead of the fine velvet of Genoa.

† Abbatucci, a Corsican of a very suspicious character.

make us believe, that he is come with designs contrary to the publick quiet. He has however surrendered himself a prisoner at the castle, and protests his repentance. As I passed by Bogognano, I learnt that a disbanded Genoese officer was seeking associates to assassinate me. He could not succeed, and finding that he was discovered, he betook himself to the woods; where he has been slain by the party detached by the magistrates of the provinces on the other side of the mountains, in order to intercept him. These ambuscades do not seem to be good preliminaries towards our accommodation with the republick of Genoa. I am now holding the syndicato in this province of Nebbio. About the 10th of next month, I shall go, for the same object, into the province of Capo Corso, and during the month of February, I shall probably fix my residence in Balagna. I shall return to Corte in the spring, to prepare myself for the opening of the General Consulta.* Wherever I am, your friendship will be present to my mind, and I shall be desirous to continue a correspondence with you. Meanwhile believe me to be

"Your most affectionate friend

"PASCAL PAOLI."

"PATRIMONIO, 28 December, 1765."

Can any thing be more condescending, and at the same time shew more the firmness of an heroick mind, than this letter? With what a gallant pleasantry does the Corsican Chief talk of his enemies! One would

* The Parliament of the nation.—ED.

think that the Queens of Genoa should become Rival Queens for Paoli. If they saw him I am sure they would.

I take the liberty to repeat an observation made to me by that illustrious minister,* whom Paoli calls the Pericles of Great Britain. It may be said of Paoli, as the Cardinal de Retz said of the great Montrose, "C'est un de ces hommes qu'on ne trouve plus que dans les Vies de Plutarque. He is one of those men who are no longer to be found but in the lives of Plutarch."

THE END.

* The Earl of Chatham. It appears from a letter published in the correspondence of the Earl of Chatham (vol. ii., p. 388) that Boswell had an interview granted him by Pitt. Boswell writes:—"I have had the honour to receive your most obliging letter, and can with difficulty restrain myself from paying you compliments on the very genteel manner in which you are pleased to treat me. . . . I hope that I may with propriety talk to Mr. Pitt of the views of the illustrious Paoli."—ED.



APPENDIX A.

Under the head of learning I must observe that there is a printing-house at Corte, and a bookseller's shop, both kept by a Luccese, a man of some capacity in his business. He has very good types; but he prints nothing more than the publick manifestoes, calendars of feast days, and little practical devotional pieces, as also the "Corsican Gazette," which is published by authority, from time to time, just as news are collected; for it contains nothing but the news of the island. It admits no foreign intelligence, nor private anecdotes; so that there will sometimes be an interval of three months during which no news-papers are published.

It will be long before the Corsicans arrive at the refinement in conducting a news-paper, of which London affords an unparalleled perfection; for I do believe an English news-paper is the most various and extraordinary composition that mankind ever produced. An English news-paper, while it informs the judicious of what is really doing in Europe, can keep pace with the wildest fancy in feigned adventures, and amuse the most desultory taste with essays on all subjects, and in every stile.—Boswell's "Account of Corsica," page 197.

APPENDIX B.

There are some extraordinary customs which still subsist in Corsica. In particular they have several strange ceremonies at the death of their relations. When a man dies, especially if he has been assassinated, his widow with all the married women in the village accompany the corpse to the grave, where, after various howlings, and other expressions of sorrow, the women fall upon the widow, and beat and tear her in a most miserable manner. Having thus satisfied their grief and passion, they lead her back again, covered with blood and bruises, to her own habitation. This I had no opportunity of seeing while I was in the island; but I have it from undoubted authority.—Boswell's "Account of Corsica," page 221.

APPENDIX C.

Having said so much of the genius and character of the Corsicans, I must beg leave to present my readers with a very distinguished Corsican character, that of Signor Clemente de' Paoli, brother of the General.

This gentleman is the eldest son of the old General Giacinto Paoli. He is about fifty years of age, of a middle size and dark complexion, his eyes are quick and piercing, and he has something in the form of his mouth which renders his appearance very particular. His understanding is of the first rate; and he has by no means suffered it to lie neglected. He was married, and has an only daughter, the wife of Signor Barbaggi one of the first men in the island.

For these many years past, Signor Clementi, being in a state of widowhood, has resided at Rostino, from whence the family of Paoli comes. He lives there in a very retired manner. He is of a Saturnine disposition, and his notions of religion are rather gloomy and severe. He spends his whole time in study, except what he passes at his devotions. These generally take up six or eight hours every day; during all which time he is in church, and before the altar, in a fixed posture, with his hands and eyes lifted up to heaven, with solemn fervour.

He prescribes to himself, an abstemious, rigid course of life; as if he had taken the vows of some of the religious orders. He is much with the Franciscans, who have a convent at Rostino. He wears the common coarse dress of the country, and it is difficult to distinguish him from one of the lowest of the people.

When he is in company he seldom speaks, and except upon important occasions, never goes into publick, or even to visit his brother at Corte. When danger calls, however, he is the first to appear in the defence of his country. He is then foremost in the

ranks, and exposes himself to the hottest action; for religious fear is perfectly consistent with the greatest bravery; according to the famous line of the pious Racine,

"Je crains DIEU, cher Abner; et n'ai point d'autre crainte."

"I fear my GOD; and Him alone I fear."

—A FRIEND.

In the beginning of an engagement he is generally calm; and will frequently offer up a prayer to heaven, for the person at whom he is going to fire; saying he is sorry to be under the necessity of depriving him of life; but that he is an enemy to Corsica, and Providence has sent him in his way, in order that he may be prevented from doing any farther mischief; that he hopes GOD will pardon his crimes, and take him to himself. After he has seen two or three of his countrymen fall at his side, the case alters. His eyes flame with grief and indignation, and he becomes like one furious, dealing vengeance every where around him.

His authority in the council is not less than his valour in the field. His strength of judgement and extent of knowledge, joined to the singular sanctity of his character, give him great weight in all the publick consultations; and his influence is of considerable service to his brother the General.—Boswell's "Account of Corsica," page 222.

REVIEWS.



DR. JOHNSON:

HIS FRIENDS AND HIS CRITICS.

By GEORGE BIRKBECK HILL, D.C.L.*

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